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# IN CIRCLING CAMPS

*A ROMANCE OF THE CIVIL WAR*

BY

JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER

AUTHOR OF

A HERALD OF THE WEST, A SOLDIER OF MANHATTAN,  
THE SUN OF SARATOGA, ETC.



NEW YORK  
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# IN CIRCLING CAMPS

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PLAY OF WORDS

THEY were dancing in the ballroom, and the music—the light flow of an Austrian waltz—rippled through the halls, the careless notes of the melody, played on such a night, returning to me with a sinister echo. Yet the touch of foreboding was faint, and I felt that it was alike folly and bad taste to be sad when others laughed.

“And I hear that he has turned back,” said Varian, in cool, precise tones. “A President without a nation or a nation without a President, which is it?—either or both? Now, being elected President, which no one denies, why does not Lincoln come to claim his own?”

This was news that he told, and I felt a quickening of my blood. Unwelcome though his words were, I would have asked him to speak more fully; but I saw Elinor’s face, and knowing from the quiver of her lips that she was about to take up the thread of the talk, I was silent.

“Turned back, do you say, Mr. Varian?” she asked. “Do you mean to tell us that Mr. Lincoln is not now on the way to Washington?—that the man whom the people have chosen to be their President is not permitted to come to the capital?”

A flush due chiefly to indignation rose to her cheeks, and her blue eyes, as clear and direct as her question,

looked into Varian's. Anger, if it be without sacrifice of dignity, becomes a beautiful woman; and having no cause to like Varian, I could find it in my heart to forgive him when I saw the look of admiration on his face. To show a proper appreciation of Elinor Maynard was to prove one's own good sense.

"I heard in the ballroom a half hour ago," replied Varian, smiling a little and showing his even white teeth—"Tourville, the man from South Carolina, I think it was who told me—that Lincoln came as far as Harrisburg to-day, became frightened there, because of a conspiracy here to kill him, carry off his Presidential Chair, or commit some other deed of violence repugnant to a peaceful Illinois rail splitter, and promptly facing about, fled to Philadelphia."

I had been trying to decide for a long time whether I liked Varian. He was a man of many facets, and each glittered with a different light. His ease of manner, his careless air, his long life in the Old World, and the inability of any one to say whether he was American or European by birth, which lent to his name a certain agreeable mystery, made him an interesting figure among us, while none could deny the charm of his conversation or his knowledge of a larger and more complex society than ours. I fancy it was the latter quality that made him attractive to young men like Pembroke and myself.

But at the present moment I was sure that I did not like him. The facet that he was presenting to our gaze gave forth a light, repellent—to me at least. He seemed to cheapen alike the nation and the crisis at the verge of which it stood, and the look that he bent upon Elinor was a little bolder than I liked, perhaps a little freer than the usage of our country favoured.

"This retreat is only for the moment," said Elinor, whose high blood, I knew, was aflame. "Lincoln will

start again, and we shall all see him become President upon the appointed day.”

She spoke with the spirit of a young and beautiful woman, having a mind not inferior to her youth and beauty. Varian's eyes were upon her, and the gleam of admiration in them deepened. There was a strange attraction about Elinor Maynard that drew all men, an illusive charm that I have never known in any other woman. I think it was the peculiar mingling of Northern and Southern blood in her veins, the odd grafting of Massachusetts stock upon Kentucky soil.

Varian's eyes lingered upon her, and the admiration in his look remained unrepressed. I noticed with a slight contraction of the heart his deepening anxiety to please her, and the manner in which he called to his aid all his knowledge of the world and women, learned in lands older and more polished than ours. As I read his eyes then he coveted this maid, and yet I knew that I had no right to blame him, since he was not alone in such a wish. He was older than Pembroke or I, but his youth was not wholly passed. He seemed to me to be at an age dangerous to women.

“A newsboy is calling his wares,” I said; “perhaps the papers are telling of Lincoln's flight.”

I raised the window a little, but I could hear only the call and not its significance. The chill February air blew in, but the night outside was silent save for the newsboy's cry and the rattle of a lone soldier's bayonet as they changed the guard. I shut the window and then heard only ourselves and the music from the ball-room.

Paul Warner, our host, heavy and fussy, joined us. He was a large, fat man, with pouchy, black rings under his eyes, and a variety of jewels on his fingers. He reeked of his wealth, and I often reflected that I had never seen two more unlike than Paul Warner, Govern-

ment contractor and rich man, and his niece, Elinor Maynard.

"I have been looking for you the last half hour, Elinor," he said, in short, gasping sentences, spreading out his hands in a deprecatory gesture until the rings upon them flashed in the gaslight. "A dozen people have asked me where you are, and I could not tell them. I have prepared for you the finest ball of the season, and you have fled."

"We were discussing important news, uncle," said Elinor.

"And what is that, my dear niece?"

"Mr. Lincoln came no farther than Harrisburg, and has returned from there to Philadelphia, to escape, it is said, a plot to kill him."

"Do you know this to be a fact?"

"I am responsible for the statement so far as this room is concerned," said Varian, "and I have no doubt of its truth."

Mr. Warner dropped his lids over his eyes until the beam from them narrowed to a point, sharp and penetrating. The vulgarity of his manners disappeared for the time, and he was the shrewd, alert business man looking into the future. I was willing to wager with an invisible opponent that I knew the trend of Paul Warner's thoughts.

"If Lincoln has gone back it means that the capital is to be left to the South, and that has the savour of speedy war," he said. "It will be war anyhow, but the flight of Lincoln will hasten it. The South has her mind made up; she is able and decided, while the North is lazy, doubting, and negligent. Who could have thought that each section would show qualities the exact opposite of those we associate with it!"

He seemed to be thoughtful, and I might have added as a spur to his reflections that war demanded supplies which made possible large contracts and

equally large profits for the wary and tolerant, but I thought it neither necessary nor polite. The beam in his eye changed to a twinkle, and I saw that Paul Warner was not displeased. But he changed the subject; and, in truth, war was an inopportune topic, time and place considered.

"Come," he said, "it is time to go to supper now. That is a call, perhaps, that does not speak so loudly to the young as it does to us who are of middle age or more, but you must heed it."

It was my privilege to take Elinor, and Varian went with our host in search of the lady with whom he was to have the happiness. I saw Elinor's eyes watching him until he disappeared in the ballroom, and when he was gone she seemed grave and abstracted. I feared that she felt the charm of this man's manner and speech and of the indefinable quality that we call, for the lack of a better name, personal magnetism. That he had it I could not deny, and men as well as women were glad to be seen receiving his notice.

"Can you tell me who and what he is, Henry?" she asked.

"Why does he arouse every one's curiosity?" I said, feeling a pang of jealousy and making my reply a question. "Even you are now asking about him, Elinor, and ordinarily there is so little in your nature that is inquisitive."

"I do not know why," she replied simply.

"No one here has learned much concerning him," I said, somewhat ashamed of the feeling that had shown in my tone. "Philip Augustus Varian has been in Washington the last six months. He came from Europe, so it is said, and there have been wagers as to whether he is English or American, while others equally wise hold that he is neither."

"He speaks English without an accent."

"Likewise French and German; so we can infer

nothing from that. In fact, Varian's interests seem to be French. It is said, whether truly I do not know, that he has some sort of a commission here from the French Emperor. Napoleon is building up an empire in Mexico with the Austrian Maximilian as his little wooden man to wear the crown, and he wants to win more prestige by breaking up the American republic, appearing then as the patron and protector of the South, for which France will take benefits. It is said that Varian—and again I warn you I know not whether it is true—is here to speak for him with the Southern leaders. Certain it is, he is intimate with some of the ablest secessionists. Elinor, I think that Varian is a dangerous man."

"Why so?" she asked, turning her clear eyes upon me. "The South is going to secede whether Mr. Varian is here or not, and if he is hostile to the Union there are ten thousand more in Washington who are equally so."

I was not thinking of politics or war, and I did not answer her. We were at the door of the supper room, from which came the sound of many voices, and I had a good excuse.

No one could complain justly of Paul Warner's table, and this night he reached the extreme degree of luxuriance and prodigality. Yet he was diplomatic, as became his trade, never extreme in the expression of opinion, and the partisans of North and South alike met around his silver and glass and china, setting the seal of approval upon his hospitality. Varian was not far from us, but on the other side of the table, where I could see him well, and I was compelled to admit that his features were strong and handsome. The sunburn of his face, and the calm, easy air with which he accepted all things as a matter of course, became him. He was in a uniform of white and silver, which I took to be a variation of a French colonel's, modified by his own



taste, and he was the most splendid figure in the room. He was talking just then to Elinor's aunt, Mrs. Maynard, a lady of thin features, acid smile, and gray complexion, who had always done me the honour of withholding from me her approval. Varian's manner toward her was as deferential as if Elinor sat in her place, and the slight softness of her features showed that she was pleased.

"Your health to-night, Miss Maynard," said a voice. "We are all your subjects. What a pity we could not cast off our allegiance in order that we might have the pleasure of coming back, renewing it, and then throwing ourselves at your feet, thus obtaining the blessings allotted to the one sinner out of a hundred. To look at this scene one would not think, Miss Maynard, that the breath of war is already upon our cheeks. War is a dreadful thing, but the nations have never been able to get along without it; it is one of the five necessary plagues—war, work, disease, debt, and Yankees."

The liquid trickle of his talk ceased for a moment as he took breath. It was Major Titus Tyler, of Mississippi, who spoke, he of the endless speech and supreme good nature, a man who saw the world through optimistic eyes. His title was not to be taken in vain. It had been earned honestly on Mexican battlefields, bravery being one of his natural and irresponsible qualities. Habit had not dimmed for me the contrast between the idle flow of the major's speech and the distinction of his appearance.

"You hold that war is a necessary evil, Major Tyler," said Varian, who was within easy hearing. "I agree with you in part at least. It is not exactly a necessary evil, but an evil that we must expect."

I did not hear the reply, a faint sound from the street coming just then to my ears and claiming my attention with its significance. It was the marching of

troops to the slow distant beat of a drum—no new sound in Washington in the closing months of the winter of 1860-'61. But the words of Major Tyler, "The breath of war is already upon our cheeks," so idly spoken, borrowed new force from the prophetic drum-beat. Yet there was no sign of war within. The silver and the glass shone in the rays of many lights, and the red wine sparkled in the goblets. Mr. Warner beamed from his black-ringed eyes and expanded in his wide waistcoat. Men and women were joyous, taking the evening for what it was. I believed that we alone had been talking or even thinking of coming dangers.

"It's the drum that you hear, Mr. Kingsford," said Varian, who saw me listening. "It is not a bad sound. All the nations have marched to its tune."

"If there is anything I hate particularly, it's trying to prove things right through precedents," said Pembroke. "You can always find a precedent, because, as the wise man said, there is nothing new under the sun."

Varian smiled tolerantly, and the talk shifted to lighter topics. The drumbeat was forgotten, and there was no bar to the increasing gaiety of the guests. I saw through the open doors of the room into the long halls, where the lights stretched in parallel rows like two belts of flame, narrowing in the distance. Mr. Warner was at his happiest. Much incense floated to him at the head of the table, and the flavour of it was pleasant. The house was one of the finest in Washington, and it was his. The beauty and distinction of his niece were reflections of his own glory. The colour and the lights appealed to his physical senses, and he was responsible for them too.

We returned to the ballroom. I could not expect to claim much of Elinor's time on such an evening, and leaving her, I paid my respects to her aunt, Mrs. Maynard. We had never been very good friends. Perhaps the hostility grew out of the ill feeling between



Mrs. Maynard and my grandmother, which was of an origin antedating my birth, and therefore so far as concerned me was an inheritance. They were near neighbours in Kentucky, and my grandmother, who was a devout woman—believing sincerely that the Kingdom of Heaven was bounded on the north by the Ohio River, and on the east, south, and west by the Presbyterian Church—had a righteous distrust of Mrs. Maynard's Northern origin and Episcopal affiliations. Mrs. Maynard, a woman capable of speaking for herself, retaliated, and, planted in such fertile ground and nourished by proximity, the weed of discord grew.

These memories must have been present with Mrs. Maynard on this night, as she received with small favour my efforts to please, the gray parchment of her face wrinkling dryly at my best-turned sentences, and her eyes following Elinor and Varian, who were then dancing together. So I excused myself presently, and walked with Pembroke into the garden, where we might find fresh air. We stood there in the darkness, the moon having faded, and looked back at the house, alive with many lights. But we remained silent, each full of his own thoughts, and I believed that his, like mine, were of Elinor and Varian.

When we returned to the house I decided that it was time for me to go. I sought Elinor, that I might pay my parting respects, and found her aunt, Varian, and Major Titus Tyler near her. There was a slight change in her manner toward me—not a lack of warmth, but a difference in its quality; I seemed younger to her.

"Mr. Kingsford and Elinor were children together, Mr. Varian," said Mrs. Maynard, drawing her thin lips into an acid smile.

"An ideal relationship," said Varian. "The only Platonic friendship that can endure. One might wish for the sake of example that nothing would interfere with the continuity of this."

“Nothing is likely to do so. These old friendships begun in childhood are very beautiful,” said Mrs. Maynard.

I did not reply to them, though my blood was hot, and said good night in a firm voice. Then I passed down the street into another atmosphere, and the lights of the great house soon faded.

## CHAPTER II

### A MODEST ARRIVAL

It was far toward morning and a light wind was dying. The night was quiet, and I saw no one near me. Alone in the darkness the news that I had heard of Lincoln's flight became a greater weight upon my spirits, and I wondered at the laxity of the North in remaining unready for the issue.

Although official winter was scarcely gone the night was mild and full of spring promise. A tremulous haze of warmth, a gift from the far south, hung over the city.

I could find no joy in the touch of spring: the distant glimpses of the river, running like melted silver in the moonlight, and the softened outlines of stone buildings near by, with the rim of hills beyond, floating up, like a mist. The approaching splendour of Nature was obscured by a sense of the disaster and wreck that would come with it, and the parting of old ties, never to be replaced by the new. My vision was coloured by my thoughts, and the haze in the air took a tinge of ominous red, tinting river and hills, and hanging like a threat over the city and its people. I wondered whose capital it would be a year from then.

I trust that I am not excitable, nor possessed of an excessive sensibility, but various causes made me keenly alive to impressions that night, especially to those of a gloomy character. There are things more serious

to a young man than the imminence of a great war—in truth, the odour of coming battles is sometimes attractive—but Elinor's changed manner toward me, slight though it was, and the presence and power of Varian coloured all else.

Having the constitutional objection of the early twenties to melancholy, I turned my back upon the Capitol, and walked more rapidly down Pennsylvania Avenue, approaching the region of light and movement. The sounds of life increased, and I passed many people. The city, usually so sober and in bed at ten, was now awake late every night, like a debauchee, and lights burned in some rooms until day. There was talk of spies and traitors, of tyranny and death—heated, perhaps; it was said that plottings and treason were going on, and of the former there was no doubt. Yet many of us, of different faith, could and would remain friends, and were able to talk calmly of the coming trial.

I heard the click of metal, and paused to look at a company of soldiers gathered around a fire that smouldered on a grass plot, sending up alternate tongues of flame and smoke. Most of the men were half asleep, sitting there in apathetic silence, the dim light of the unsteady flames falling now and then across their lean faces and revealing their strong features. They were of the North, and I was impressed more deeply than ever before by the lack of difference between them and the Southerners: merely a little more sun in the cheeks of the Southern men, merely a little more briskness in the speech of the Northern, and that was all.

The fire blazed up a little and flickered over the steel of bayonet and rifle barrel. The men remained silent and motionless in dusky rows in front of the coals, but the sentinels walked their beats with regular step. I had seen companies of militia, more or less for play and display, but these men came for another purpose.

Their own serious faces, the lack of sport and jest, and the sombre silence told that the soldiers were there to carry on their real trade—fighting; not to protect the city from invasion, but Americans in arms against Americans—for the first time.

They began to change the guard, and some one said: "All's well." This struck me as the grimmest joke of my time. The two halves of a nation that had intended to enlighten mankind and make it better were going to cut each other's throats, and all the world would sit by and laugh at the sight. And we would not be able to deny that the spectators were entitled to their laugh.

I looked at my watch, and finding daybreak nearly due concluded that it was not worth while to seek my bed. So I continued my walk, choosing to meditate, which we can do best when in motion.

A few whiffs of rain were blown into my face by the irregular puffs of wind, and the air became raw and cold with the edge of winter. But I was wrapped in a heavy coat, and, with hands deep in the pockets and the collar high around my throat, I thought nothing of bodily suffering; instead I rather liked the rain upon me, as it imparted a pleasant coolness to the blood.

The hum of the plotting city died; the men with the thin, eager faces were gone at last from the streets, given up now to the lone watchman and a few such as I who were not in search of sleep. But, occupied with plans, important to myself at least, I did not feel lonely, walking to and fro until the misty light in the east betokened the sunrise.

I watched idly as the sun showed the edge of his great red disk above the hills and looked upon the city, but when he swung clear of the earth and began to creep up the eastern skies I walked back toward the avenue.

The light was yet misty in the streets between the

houses, and when I heard a faint but steady beat and looked for its cause I saw only a formless bulk approaching. I stopped, my curiosity aroused, not so much by the figure as by this jar upon the hours of silence and loneliness which came upon me like an awakening. Out of the formless bulk four points of light shone, and as the beat grew louder the eyes of two horses appeared, and a carriage slowly rose behind them in the dusk. The horses blew the rime of frost from their noses and came on with regular tread. The driver sat upon his seat, holding the lines with mechanical hand, his face red with cold, and the silver incrusting his mustache. He glanced once my way, but wasted no further time upon me, and my lack of importance did not hurt my feelings.

I looked at the carriage—a heavy, ordinary, closed affair, spattered with mud—and my eyes, passing, would have left it, forgotten forever, but they were caught by a face at the glass door—the worn, anxious, and apprehensive face of a man—and I looked again. I wondered what could take abroad so distinguished a member of Congress as this in a closed carriage at such an early hour in the morning.

I had recognised him at once, and I knew, moreover, that he was one of the boldest, strongest, and most resourceful of the Republican leaders. No ordinary errand could draw him just when the daylight was coming, and, burning with curiosity—a curiosity that I felt to be pardonable in the troubled times—I turned back and followed the carriage, which had now passed me.

It went on at a steady walk, apparently by the modesty of its gait and appearance desiring to avoid the attention of the awakening capital; its course did not lead it toward the residence of the man who occupied it or of any other conspicuous personage, and the circumstance confirmed me in the belief that I was wit-

nessing a phase in some one of the schemes and plots of which the city was now so full. Determined more than ever to see its development, if consistent with honour and not too difficult, I followed at even pace, keeping twenty yards or so between myself and the chase, the pursuit not wholly devoid of humour. The light of the rising sun fell sometimes in fiery shafts across the red face of the stolid driver, but was not able to add much to the vividness of its tints.

The carriage proceeded at its sober gait, as if it had all the world and eternity before it, no noise disturbing the dawning morning but the roll of its wheels and the beat of the horses' feet. Presently it entered the railroad station for the Northern trains and stopped there, the driver remaining stolidly in his seat. The statesman opened the door and looked up the railroad track, his eyes following the shining rails with intense anxiety; evidently the gaze ended at nothing but the horizon, for a look of disappointment came into the eager eyes, and then he closed the door and shut himself in, as if wishing to escape observation even in the moments of waiting. There were no others about the station save a few employees and two or three people who seemed to expect friends on an early train.

My eyes had followed the statesman's up the railroad track into the north, and they too had seen only the horizon and the rising splendour of the morning.

But I believed now that I knew the cause of the evasive, almost secret, journey of this carriage, and again I thanked fortune because I was there to see. My watch marked half past six, and a few moments later I saw a faint brown spot appear against the silvery edge of the horizon; it expanded, then deepened in colour, throwing off shreds and patches of white, and the rails began to hum with the coming train.

The statesman stepped out of the carriage and entered the station. I followed him, and, affecting an air



of unconcern as if I expected a friend, met the train too. A very tall man came out of a car and, descending the step, looked around as if he knew some one would be there to meet him. It seemed to me that he was fully six and a half feet in height, somewhat bent in the shoulders, and with one of those long, meagre, bony, brown, and seamed faces so characteristic of the West, where winters and summers are extreme and life has been hard. I looked once into the stranger's eyes, and thought them the saddest that I had ever seen, so full were they of melancholy, and yet with a certain pleading. As the member of Congress ran forward to meet him he climbed awkwardly down the step. His gait was so shambling, his black clothes hung so ungracefully about him, his whole appearance was so different from the men of easy manners and distinguished bearing whom the South chose for high place, that my first emotion was one of keen disappointment. He looked the rail splitter that he had been; an awkward Western borderer, with nothing in his appearance to inspire the respect—fear, even—that was needed at so critical a time, when the strongest of the nation were at each other's throats. I thought of a missionary with a prayer book trying to control a cageful of tigers, when the man wanted was a Hercules with a red-hot bar of iron. The stranger's melancholy eyes met my own again, and at this second meeting I was powerfully attracted; I thought that I saw there so much pity, so much human affection; then his gaze wandered on to the member of Congress, whose eyes were alight with gladness, showing an obvious feeling of great relief.

The statesman helped the tall stranger into the carriage, then entering too, closed the door hastily, but spoke first to the stolid driver, who drove away much faster than he had come.

I did not follow, but I watched the carriage as it passed out of sight. I understood the full importance



of the event that I had just witnessed. Lincoln, the President elect, was in Washington, when all but the few who helped to bring him believed that he had turned back and was at Philadelphia, afraid to enter the capital and take the seat to which he had been chosen, dreading the extreme anger of the South. The first great step was taken, and taken safely. I knew well that the news of his coming, and in such a manner, would set the South on fire, being looked upon there as a hostile movement, while the North would celebrate it as a victory.

## CHAPTER III

### A SOLDIER OF THE REPUBLIC

I VISITED none of my friends that day, wishing to be alone—that is, alone in a crowd, where I could observe and myself pass unnoticed. The drama now unfolding in Washington was of the most absorbing nature, and all my personal interests were involved in it. Yet my own course was clear, and I could watch others.

I passed from crowd to crowd, noting the increasing strain of the situation, caused by the arrival of Lincoln, the news of which soon spread throughout the city, and the growing volume of belligerent talk, much of it real. In the course of the afternoon I entered a hotel where the crowd in the public room was the thickest that I had met yet; a crowd, too, which seemed to be wholly Southern. I saw no one whom I knew, and my attention wandering shortly, I began to think of Varian and Elinor and Mrs. Maynard. The thought of these three in connection was not pleasant, but I could not dismiss it.

When I looked up again I saw that another man in all that turbulent crowd was silent. The stranger's glance wandered my way presently, and I was drawn by his expression of humorous sympathy. There seemed to be between us the indefinable but mutual attraction of two who are of one mind and differ from those around them, the hostile crowd acting as a force to press them together.

I examined this man who held my gaze. He was about fifty, short, dark, thick, his shoulders and chest immense, his face almost as brown as an Indian's, and his hands large and rough. His dress was plain and careless; evidently he was not of high station in life, but the open expression of his broad face, his steady gaze which said, though not offensively, that he considered himself as good as anybody, made him singularly attractive to those who liked strength and candour. His eyes twinkled as if he were enjoying a fine comedy at a theatre, and presently he came over and sat down beside me. I observed at once the erectness of his figure, the manner in which he threw back his shoulders, and that his was a soldier's walk.

"Heap big talk, as the Indians would say," began the stranger, filling his pipe slowly and lighting it.

His manner invited confidence.

"They are telling each other that the war will last but two or three months," I said, wishing to draw him. "One or two battles they believe will suffice to divide the Union."

The stranger took his pipe from his mouth and watched a whiff of smoke rise to the ceiling. His eyes still twinkled, and the lines of his face curved into a smile, making deep creases.

"I heard them," he replied. "I had an uncle who was a sailor. He used to say that lots of stuff came alongside, but he hoisted mighty little of it on board, and stowed away still less in the hold. That's my opinion of talk like this."

He waved his hand at the crowd, which was paying no attention either to him or me.

"What do they know of war?" he continued. "Not one of them ever saw a battle."

"You are a soldier," I said, my first impression confirmed.

"Perhaps these gabblers would not call me one,

but I've drawn Uncle Sam's pay for thirty years, and I've tried to earn my little per diem. I followed old Fuss and Feathers to the Halls of the Montezumas—and I don't want any such halls to live in; I can tell you the tribe of every Indian on the plains by the style of his war paint; and I know by one look into a quartermaster's eye whether he steals rations. Isn't that enough?"

He took the pipe out of his mouth again, and with heartfelt satisfaction watched the smoke curl upward. Evidently he had the just proportion of egotism that makes a man happy. He showed, too, the slight and repressed tinge of garrulity necessary to a good comrade.

"You are of the regular army, then?" I said.

"Of course; I never heard of any other army—real army."

Obviously his professional pride was aroused. My liking increased. The stranger's appearance was attractive and his manner yet more so. He was the incarnation of good humour.

"Thirty years in the army!" I repeated.

"Yes, and it's more years than you are old, with some to spare. Thirty years ago I enlisted with Uncle Sam as a private—a common, raw private, mind you—a green, fool private—a private that was nothing but dirt under the captain's heel, and six months ago I resigned as a——"

"As a what?"

"As a private, still a common private."

He laughed a quiet but deep and unctuous laugh.

"Still a private," he resumed, "and willing to be one, but not a raw private, nor a green private, nor dirt under the officer's heel. A good many lieutenants fresh from West Point, with their dress-parade uniforms on, and with as much knowledge of real war as a baby has of a saw mill, have been willing to ask the opinion of Thomas Shaftoe, private soldier, U. S. A."

"Why did you quit the army?"

"Things were dull then. I didn't know that this war was breeding so fast; but now it's close at hand, and I'll enlist again. I'm going to join the volunteer boys in the West; they're fine stuff—the best in the world, but raw, and maybe an old soldier like myself can do a lot of good among them."

He smoked his pipe vigorously, looking keenly at me from under his heavy eyebrows.

He said presently:

"You're carrying the whole world on your shoulders!"

I started and then smiled. His manner was so genial that one could not take offence.

"Why do you say that?" I asked.

"I know it; I can see it, and the load's getting heavy, young man; throw it off! you look tired. Don't fret; it doesn't pay; there are just twelve hundred million people in the world, so I've heard, and no man is responsible for every one of them. Now, I take it that you're trying to settle this whole war business all by your young and inexperienced self, and, just naturally, you are getting mixed up and troubled with the size of the job. Let it go and do your part, which is the one twelve-hundred-millionth of the whole. It will come out all right; if it don't, let it go wrong—you'll not be to blame."

"You are sure that there will be a war?" I asked, pleased at his sympathy, but not telling him that the coming struggle was not the whole cause of my concern.

"As sure as I am that the sun will rise in the morning. You don't think that the political orators, the stump speakers, have been at work all these years for nothing, do you? You've heard, no doubt, that there are special hells reserved for special people, but if I had my way the special hell of the special hells would be put aside for the stump speakers. It's a funny thing

to me that the people of this country, who do most things so well, and are so keen, should allow themselves to be led off by any man with the gift of gab that comes along. He may be a fool or a scamp in everything but stump speaking, a drunkard, a gambler, a fellow who does not pay his debts, and whose word you would not trust five minutes; but let him get up on a platform and tell a string of jokes, and rave about our wrongs, and the whole crowd will shout that he's the very fellow to manage the finances and the army and the navy and the post office, and everything else that the Government's got. Now, the South knows that slavery is wrong, even when she says it's not; but she's been abused so much about it, and charged with so many things that she hasn't done by the Northern people—some of whom are still living on the inherited profits of the slave trade, and whose consciences have spoken late—that she's put her back up, and she says: 'All right; I've got slavery, and I'm going to keep it; what are you going to do about it?' She is so mad she can't see straight, and she will make a fool of herself and have a war; but if you could find a wide plain, lead all the thirty million people of the United States into it, introduce 'em to each other, and let 'em see what they really are, the whole trouble—slavery, State rights, and everything else—would be finished in ten minutes. Instead, there will be a bloody war, and the demagogues of both sides who have caused it will be the first to take to the woods when the shooting begins."

He spoke with frankness, and it was manifest from his tone that he had no feeling against either section. The more I looked at him the more I liked him, and I thought that he liked me as well. This seemed to be one of those happy chances of which every man has a fair percentage, and a serious thought developed itself rapidly in my mind. Meanwhile I gazed at him with intentness, though in a manner that was unconscious.

"Well, Mr. Judge, what do you think of me?" he asked at length, the humorous twinkle reappearing in his eyes, and the creases forming again around his mouth.

I would have apologized for my rude gaze, but I saw that he was not offended, and I said:

"I think that you look like a good soldier and a man who would prove a first-class comrade. I am to be a soldier, too, or at least try. I suggest that you undertake my education in the ranks."

"It's a heavy responsibility that you are putting on me," he replied, the twinkle deepening. "Are you prepared to take advice and never to sulk?"

"I'll try."

"Then, if you keep your word, you will make a good beginning," he said, "and we stand agreed."

The bargain was signed, attested, and sealed with a handshake, and then we adjourned to hear a street preacher, who had been on the sidewalk for the last five minutes haranguing whomsoever would listen.

In our country, where every man may speak his mind, or his lack of it, strange people sometimes lift up their voices and add to the picturesqueness of life, if not to its wisdom. The preacher who addressed the crowd was tall, thin, angular, and the fire of fanaticism burned in his eyes.

"I bring a message of peace on earth and good will to men," he said.

The words had an unreal echo in the war-laden atmosphere of that city. Somebody laughed.

"You prepare for war, and lo! the kingdom of heaven is at hand," continued the preacher, turning his burning eyes upon the one who laughed.

The crowd was silent, respecting his earnestness, and he began to talk with a natural but wild and disjointed eloquence. He quoted the command, "Thou shalt do no murder." He spoke of the wicked cities



destroyed for their sins, and he said that we were marching to the same fate. He was like some Hebrew prophet upbraiding the children of Israel when they were sunk in sin.

The crowd was awed for a little while by his wild emphasis and his striking appearance as he stood there, his eyes lighting up his meagre face like two coals and his long white hair thrown back. But the impression soon faded, and they began to laugh at him as a fanatic. Then I saw how idle his efforts were. The passions of the multitude had been raised, and they could not be stilled by a few words. One might as well preach to soldiers of the blessings of peace when their fingers were on the trigger and the enemy coming.

The crowd passed from laughing to jeering, and then two or three missiles were thrown, but in a moment a tall man strode among them and pushed the offenders violently to one side, speaking to them so sternly and with such authority that they slipped away ashamed.

It was Varian.

"It is just as I told you, Mr. Kingsford," he said to me. "The mob is fit only to be ruled by the best, who are also the fewest. Freedom of speech, even to the lowest, is one of the chief boasts of this country, and you have just beheld the common people themselves trying to prevent it. Only an aristocracy can secure free speech and other rights for the multitude. I think that if I had not interfered you would have done so speedily."

He held out his hand as if we were the best of friends, and I had no choice but to take it. Then I introduced my new acquaintance Shaftoe, and he was polite to him also.

"You are a type of the American regular soldier, Mr. Shaftoe," he said, "and I think that you will soon have a chance to prove what you can do."

Shaftoe assented silently, and we walked a little way



together. Then the soldier left us, he and I agreeing to meet on the morrow.

“Rough, but honest and stanch, I should say,” commented Varian. “The plebeian type in its best form. Society, I repeat, Mr. Kingsford, must be composed of two classes, the patrician and plebeian, each with its virtues. The ancient world has proved it. I know that you do not agree with me, but at last you will find me to be right.”

When we parted he gave me a courteous invitation to visit him at his rooms.

“I shall have some friends there,” he said, “who, I think, you will find agreeable, and we can play cards, discuss politics or not, as you choose, and practise with the foils. I learned swordsmanship in Europe, and I think I can promise that you shall not be bored.”

His manner as he gave me the invitation was simple and wholly agreeable, and I accepted.

## CHAPTER IV

### A SKY OF STEEL

I MET Shaftoe the next day, according to appointment, and the second talk with him strengthened the first impression. He was a man who had served his country well for many years and had received little reward, but was without bitterness. His steady optimism made me feel ashamed of my momentary fits of depression, when I reflected how much kinder Providence had been to me than to this veteran, who was never gloomy. I introduced him to Pembroke, and they became good friends at once.

"Sorry you are going wrong," said Shaftoe to Pembroke. "The South is in for a terrible licking, and she won't be able to say that it was in a just cause."

"I can't help it," replied Pembroke. "I am a son of Virginia, and what Virginia does, that I do. I am like Colonel Randolph, one of our neighbours, Mr. Shaftoe. They came to him last week and offered him a general's commission in the Confederate army, because he was a veteran of the Mexican War, and a man of influence and judgment. He said: 'Well, boys, you will get whipped like the devil and you will deserve it, but you are my people and I am with you.' That's the way I feel about it, without admitting that we are to get the whipping or that we shall deserve it, and I mean no criticism of you, Henry, for I believe in a man following the course that he thinks right."

Meanwhile the days passed, and that most frightful of all disasters, a civil war, came nearer and nearer to our poor country.

The development of events in Washington could not fail to be of the deepest interest. Every one was free to look on and watch. The arrival of Lincoln set the torch, in truth, and the conflagration had begun. And but one party to the inevitable war was preparing.

Spring again made treacherous promises; tender young blades of grass crept up among the withered herbage of winter, streaks of green began to appear in the foliage, and the breezes of the south had the scent of flowers, but then the cold winds would come again and the skies would turn gray and overcast. Through warmth and cold alike the warlike work of the South went on, the capital clung to its old sloth, and the heavy North, immersed in business, refused to believe; it said that the South was only joking.

I kept away from Paul Warner's house for the present, nor did I pay my promised visit to Varian. Yet I often heard of both Elinor and him through Pembroke and Major Tyler. In truth, I passed Elinor twice in the street. Once she was riding with Varian and did not notice me until she was near, when he called her attention. She bowed, and I saw a faint flush on her face.

She was in a carriage the second time with her aunt, who sat erect, stiff, and sharper faced than ever.

"Henry," said Major Tyler to me, "the odds are ten to five that she will be Varian's wife inside of six months. The uncle favours it and so does the aunt, both from worldly reasons. The uncle's god is money, and therefore he has no party; he wants to keep favour with both sides: if the South wins, Varian, his friend and nephew-in-law, will be a power, while if the South doesn't win there is nothing lost. The aunt is caught by Varian's foreign glitter, visions of a title for her

niece, a great position at the French Emperor's court, and much reflected glory for herself; it's a failing of our American women—the only one that they have, I admit. There were those Baltimore beauties who married British noblemen of high rank, and they have set a most unfortunate example. Stick to your own kind, I say, and you will be happier."

"But Varian is not a nobleman," I said. "You do not even know that he is not American."

"That is true," admitted the major; "but whatever he is he is a splendid fellow, and a man of power. He represents at least one great sovereign, and perhaps he can speak for another, too. And I don't mind telling you, Henry, for you know it already, he's one of the best friends the South ever had. What a pity you can't go with us! Change your mind and make your friends happy."

All the major's sanguine nature beamed in his eyes, and I saw that he, too, had succumbed to the personality and influence of Varian. He repeated his statement that Varian would be Elinor's husband inside of six months, and he asked why not? Elinor was a fine girl and Varian was a fine man, and a fine couple they would make. As for himself, he was enchanted with him. He had never before met a man who was at once a courtier, a diplomatist, a scholar, and a philosopher, a man of taste and humour, who excelled in all things. He was proud to know him.

Then he spoke of Varian's value to the South, and from that subject passed to the South itself, speaking of its glorious and approaching future.

"What are your plans for an independent South?" I asked, curious to see the full splendour of the major's dream.

"As soon as our independence is established and our power consolidated we shall round out our empire," he said in his grandest manner. "Cuba is to come

first. It belongs to the American continent, and Spain is no longer able to manage the island. Then we shall annex Mexico—an easy enough matter, as she is eaten up by internal dissensions and needs us. Central America will follow, and maybe more after that. We shall have an empire of two million square miles at the least, as much as Imperial Rome had in her zenith, and we shall build around the Gulf and the Caribbean a power equal to that which she established around the Mediterranean. Our propaganda is already in progress; the Knights of the Golden Circle have attended to that.”

His eyes sparkled and his face flushed with the splendour of his vision as he saw it. He was not too old to dream dreams. He never would be.

The major’s discourse confirmed me in my avoidance of Elinor and her people. But Pembroke reproached me.

“You are doing wrong, Henry,” he said. “It’s stupid stubbornness, and I tell you so. Only yesterday she was asking about you, and wondering at your strange conduct. I was unable to make any apology for you.”

“There was no necessity for your doing so,” I replied hastily.

“You can not quarrel with me, I warn you,” said the honest boy, looking at me so frankly that I was ashamed of myself. He came the next day with a positive message from Elinor that I must see her at Mr. Warner’s.

When I called at the house I was in dread lest Mrs. Maynard’s sour face should be the first to appear, but my fortune was better; it was Elinor who met me.

“You wished to see me?” I said stiffly.

She seemed to take no notice of my manner, but asked me why I had deserted her uncle’s house. I was embarrassed, and I made some vague explanations about preparing for the war.

"I thought that I would not be missed," I added, coming nearer to the heart of the matter. "Mr. Varian fills my place so well—that is, if I ever had one."

"It is sufficient for Mr. Varian to fill his own place, if he have any," she replied, the colour in her cheeks deepening a little. She saw that I noticed the new flush, and it increased. Then she attacked me with fine irony, telling me that she had heard how I was passing my time in moody loneliness—I knew that Pembroke was the informer—and was I to turn off all my old friends merely because they were choosing a different side in the war?

"Don't you see how hard it is for me to stand firm when all those around me oppose me?" she said. "It is easy for a man to choose his course and pursue it, but what can a woman do when the world has bound her with many cords?"

There was appeal in her voice, and I replied, rather weakly:

"Your aunt does not wish me to come here."

"Let us not quarrel now," she continued. "The war will soon separate all of us who are here in Washington."

"And then we may never see each other again," I said.

She did not answer, and I left presently. As I passed through the hall I was overtaken by Paul Warner. He was friendly and familiar, shook my hand heartily, and then took my arm under his.

"I am going your way," he said, "and we shall walk together. I want to talk to you, and you have seen Elinor. I am glad you came. She has been inquiring what has become of you. Elinor is a girl who is faithful to old acquaintance, and she will not forget when she enters upon a newer and larger life. It's all true. You've heard the gossip, of course, about her and Varian. He is ready to think that the ground she walks

on is sacred. He is a great man, too, and if his plans here fail, he'll take her to Europe, where she'll have a position worthy of her. It will be either Madame la Comtesse So-and-so at Paris, or My Lady Something-or-other at London, and you and I, Henry, shall go over there some day and see them in all their glory."

He talked volubly, a coarse and in the main good-natured man, and passing from one topic to another soon approached the subject of the war.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, eh, Henry?" he quoted. "Who said that? Either the Bible or Shakespeare, I'll wager, and both are good authorities. Now young men like you will shoulder rifles, go off and get killed, while I shall stay here and—and——"

"What shall you do, Mr. Warner?" I asked, as he hesitated.

"I shall stay here out of range of the bullets and not get killed," he replied.

But I knew very well that he saw before him the gleam of a pyramid of golden dollars, and he continued to talk of the opportunities the war would offer to the alert and the cautious. I did not say nay, and when we parted he was still under the impression that I had been drinking at the fountain of wisdom.

Meanwhile the time for the inauguration of the new President approached.



## CHAPTER V

### MAKING A RULER

THE morning of the 4th of March came, dark, cloudy, and threatening, cold winds blowing off the hills and river, and men and women wrapping themselves in cloaks and overcoats. Faces became pinched, and lips showed blue in the blasts. Spring had fled again with all her deceitful promises; the premature buds were nipped, the young green on the foliage was frostbitten into brown, and winter wailed in full desolation through the streets and around the houses of the city.

Yet it was a day for people to come forth, because a new ruler was about to take the office to which he had been elected, and duty ordered a whole nation to rejoice with him. But with the event only a few hours away, there were still some who believed that it might never occur; and many more who wished the belief true. It seemed to me that everybody was forgetting the vast toil and cost with which the nation had been built up, that sacrifices, countless in number, made in the earlier days had been dismissed as nothing, and the counsels of the great men, the memory of whom all revered, tossed aside. But the founders themselves had shirked the very questions now dividing the people and threatening them with a bloody war; and I reflected on the truth of the saying, that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, although nothing had been said about such a



heavy compounding of interest as I was about to witness.

No omen of good fortune could be drawn from the angry skies which lowered in the whole circle of the heavens, and shivering in my overcoat, I went forth to witness the last act in the making of a ruler. A Congress depleted by the secession of Southern members had voted down the day before a peace resolution, a proposed compromise which pleased nobody and angered everybody; and one side as before went on with its preparations, while the other remained absorbed in business and still would not believe.

My good friends, Shaftoe and Pembroke, the one for the Union and the other for the South, were with me. Their difference of opinion never caused any disagreement between them, nor was it necessary for us in our talk to ignore the quarrel which was about to divide the nation. We could discuss it with perfect good temper, which I think was a sure proof of lasting friendship. I congratulated myself daily upon the impulse which had caused me to seek the companionship of Shaftoe.

We passed through the streets and joined a crowd in front of Willard's Hotel who were waiting to see the man of the hour come forth and take his place. It was a strange gathering, of which we made a small part: a few who had come there from a curiosity of high purpose, and after these all the idle and noisy of the capital, a ragged crowd, at least half of it negroes, many of it boys and not so many women, noisy, talkative, chewing much tobacco and spitting more, cracking bad jokes and cursing sometimes, because the chief figure in the show did not hurry upon the stage and let himself be seen, and yet not bad natured, nor wishing any mischance to happen, unless the display should prove unpicturesque. The metallic rattle of arms and the flash of bayonets came down the avenues, adding to the

sombre note that was dominant on this official day of rejoicing.

Looking at my watch, I saw that it was past noon, and the new man had not come forth to be President. He lingered yet behind the walls that had sheltered him since his arrival in the capital, and the crowd eager for its free show was becoming impatient and critical. Not especially hostile to Lincoln, it grew angry with him because it had to wait so long in the cold for its rights, and I shared the feeling. Perhaps Lincoln at the very last would shirk the issue and the mighty risks and cost of civil war.

"He is afraid," said some one aloud. "The rail splitter of the backwoods knows that he does not belong in the seat of Washington and Jefferson."

It was Tourville, the South Carolinian, who spoke, likable enough most of the time, but possessing the gift of irresponsible speech, and the spirit of prophecy was heavy upon him just then. Not far away hovered Major Tyler, stately in his finest array, his red cheeks redder in the March wind, and his long white hair showing like snow against his black hat brim. Neither saw us just then, and it was soon evident that the major shared Tourville's feelings, as they began to jeer.

They talked of the great break-up just ahead, the superiority in all vital respects of the republic that the South would establish to the shop-worn, cast-off remnant left to the North; the ridiculous nature of the new President, the Illinois rail splitter, the first ignorant backwoodsman to be chosen ruler of the nation; they wondered if his message to the people would be merely a string of the bad jokes which were his only product. I grew angry, but I held my wrath; I began to feel a great sympathy for this Lincoln whom everybody abused. Ugly and commonplace in bearing he might be, but those sad eyes could not belong to a dishonest or cruel man, and the seams in his face and stoop in his

shoulders had been made by work, the common heritage of his countrymen. I had been disappointed in his appearance, I scarcely confessed to myself how deeply, but after all we had no right to expect anything else of a man chosen from surroundings of such utter democracy. Unconsciously I began to look upon the new leader as a sort of prophet.

"I hope you don't think, Henry, that they are talking for me as well as for themselves, just because I am going with the South too," said Pembroke, looking annoyed at the wholesale and violent criticism to which we were compelled to listen. "Tourville, when the blood has gone to his head, speaks first and thinks afterward, and the major is borne away by the force of his example."

"Why shouldn't they talk if they feel that way?" said Shaftoe. "They are not the men who do the most harm. It's the silent ones that our side have to dread."

The crowd swayed about, and groaned, not with pain, but impatience. The cold wind swept down from the hills, and the gray circle of clouds thickened and darkened. There was no cheerful note in all the sombre scene save that which came from a little group of which Major Tyler and Tourville had become the centre; they seemed to draw an acute delight from the embarrassed situation, the ominous skies, the necessity of an armed force to protect the shabby entrance of the new ruler upon his duties, and the chance that he might not come out at all to take the oath before men, but accept it in his own apartments in the same secret manner in which he had arrived in Washington. I suspected that part of their gaiety and talk was a mere assumption, since not even a friend of the South and wellwisher of its plans could feel very cheerful at such a gloomy scene, surely serving some day as a landmark from which to date many disasters. We walked farther away, not.

wishing to hear more, drawing our overcoat collars higher around our faces and turning our backs to the winds from the hills, which were growing colder and cut to the bone.

The shabby crowd billowed and heaved like deep waters in a storm, began to give forth shouts and approving cries, and then parted in half, forming a narrow lane, down which came a carriage containing a single man, and that man old and troubled. He was a large, but awkward figure, the wrinkles and seams were interwoven thickly on his broad face, and his hair was short, thin, and gray. He was very old, showing all his years and more, and his look of time was heightened by his old-fashioned dress; his silk hat was low in the crown and extremely broad in the brim, his tall, stiff collar cut his ears, and over his chest and throat surged the waves and folds of a huge white tie. Beneath the collar and tie all his dress was jet black, the swallowtail coat of a cut many years earlier. The man's appearance was not without dignity, but the pathetic note predominated. His whole aspect was of one crushed by care; it showed in the sunken eyes, the seamed face, and the drooping lines around the mouth. It seemed fitting that he should be alone in the carriage, for so he was in the world, rejected by all the parties, including his own, paying the usual price of one who tries to please people who do not please each other.

There was a hum in the crowd as he rode through, followed by a faint groan, a cheer equally faint, and then apathetic silence. The men and the women and the boys showed no curiosity, their interest in him was due solely to the fact that he was the signal for something else, and after the signal they waited for the other.

The solemn, gloomy man went on, turning his heavy eyes but once or twice to look upon the crowd that four years before had watched him coming in, not going

out, and, full of eager curiosity, had thundered in applause at the sight of his face. He felt the full keenness of the old and cruel jest, "The king is dead; long live the king!" and he knew that the reign of the dying king would never be considered glorious. He, too, shivered a little as the cold winds cut his face, and drew the collar of his coat more closely around his neck. I looked once at the group of Southerners; they were regarding the man in the carriage with eyes in which anger and contempt were mingled, as if he had been half their friend and then had failed.

The solemn coachman stopped at the hotel and opened the door of the carriage for the sombre old man, who climbed heavily and awkwardly out, disappearing a moment later in the building.

The crowd burst into talk when he had gone, but in another minute relapsed into the silence of waiting. We pushed a little closer, looking over the heads of those shorter than ourselves.

The door of the hotel opened again, and the old man came out arm in arm with another man, as solemn and awkward as himself. The second towered over the first, despite the stoop in his shoulders, and had he straightened himself up there would have been none perhaps in the watching crowd to match him in height. Gaunt, hollow-cheeked, his face too a network of seams, with the sad, pathetic eyes looking from under the heavy brows, he also was a melancholy figure, and it seemed fitting that the two men should lean upon each other. His costume was as sombre and old-fashioned as his companion's—new in cloth, but bad in cut, and seeming in every particular to have been made for some one else. He carried in his disengaged hand a great black cane with a huge gold head, and as he twirled it about in his uneasy awkwardness it gave to his bearing a strange grotesqueness, at which one, however, could never laugh. Nobody was further from

laughing than I; the pathos of this man, his unconscious air of martyrdom, his look of benignity which seemed to embrace all, friends and enemies alike, impressed me more powerfully than ever, and made me forget his awkwardness and ugliness.

The same impression seemed to have been made upon the thoughtless or sneering crowd; no one spoke aloud when the two appeared, and the silence continued while they climbed heavily into the carriage. There they sat side by side, the old and the new, and the solemn coachman, turning his solemn horses, drove solemnly toward the Capitol, the crowd stringing out behind it in a procession which was not dignified, nor was it disorderly—merely curious and often ragged and immature.

The two men in the carriage never looked back at their following, and rarely spoke to each other. No ray of sunlight fell upon them. Once I thought I felt a dash of rain against my face, but looking up I saw only the threatening clouds stalking across the sky. There was no colour in all the scene save the gleam of bayonets, and that added only another sombre touch to the tragedy. Soldiers had been there at similar events, but never before with the expectation of using the arms they carried. Shaftoe and Pembroke walked by my side in silence.

The carriage stopped before a square platform built from the Capitol, and the two helped each other out. Nobody looked at the first, all at the second man who walked upon the wooden stage and stood for a moment facing ten thousand people looking so curiously at him; he took off his hat and held it awkwardly in one hand, while he swung the great cane with equal awkwardness in the other. There were men at the far corner of the platform, but none came forward, none spoke. His look became embarrassed, and the crowd gazing at him felt a strange embarrassment too; neither



seemed to know what to do, and each understood the trouble of the other. I shared the feeling, and the pain of the suspense was increased when my eyes wandered beyond the lone figure in black and stopped at another figure, a Texas senator whom I knew, a zealous supporter of the new Southern empire, a bitter enemy of the old republic as it stood, leaning against the doorway of the Capitol, his arms folded across his breast, his face smiling, contemptuous, his white teeth showing as he looked upon the new ruler, standing in awkward silence, and the waiting and puzzled crowd below; he did not move or speak, but remained fixed in his dramatic attitude, his smiling gaze, which contained only irony, passing from Lincoln to the crowd and from the crowd to Lincoln, as if he would cast a malignant spell over both.

The tall man in black at last leaned his great cane against a corner of the railing that surrounded him like the boards of a pen, and looked vainly for a place to put his hat. A short, thickset man stepped from the silent group behind him and taking the hat from his hands held it and waited. The rescuer was one of those whom Lincoln had beaten in the race for the Presidency, the choice of a great party, and the crowd, seeing the grace of the act, the first of the day not marked by constraint or awkwardness, applauded, though not loudly, the gloomy heavens and the strange nature of the moment seeming to forbid much noise.

Then another came forward, a figure, older and drier and thinner than all that had gone before, a wrinkled man, clad in heavy black robes, out of which his face looked, as pale as that of the dead. The Chief Justice of the nation was ready to administer the oath to the new President, while the old one, who had ridden with him in the carriage, compelled by custom to assist at his own burial, was about to pass his last minute of office.

"The parson has come, the funeral can go on," said some one, and others laughed.

Yet I was forced to admit the justice of the comparison. Those weary old men waiting there, and then the oldest of them all appearing in his black robes, struck me with a deeper chill than any that I had felt before. My thoughts had always given funerals a colour and note like this—sodden gray skies, a raw March wind, wrinkled old men in black reciting mechanical phrases in monotonous voices, and a group of silent people listening in pious resignation, anxious to get it over quickly and go home. Yes, it was a funeral, and perhaps but few sincere mourners were present.

The old man, the oldest of the old, administered the oath; the new President was born and the old one, standing sadly in the background, the heavy lids drooping over his eyes, ceased to be.

Mr. Lincoln then turned his face to the crowd and read his address, according to the custom prescribed to new presidents. Much of his awkwardness, his air of hesitation, had vanished, and he straightened the curve out of his shoulders, showing his real great height; his voice became clear and strong as he read the words, and he looked with an air of confidence over the crowd, which he knew contained so many threatening to himself. He understood the extraordinary nature of the scene in which he was the chief and almost the only actor; that he was pronouncing a benediction to be followed immediately not by peace, but by a bloody convulsion involving the whole nation, and himself perhaps as the chief victim. Though seeing all these things with the preternatural foresight which Nature had given to him as a recompense, and over, for many of the things which she had bestowed upon the ordinary man, but not him, he did not flinch, and I saw in his manner and bearing evidences of the rare quality which constitutes true greatness, a courage that increases with the



dangers confronting it. The ugliness of his face passed away and I beheld only the light of his eyes—brave, forgiving, and still pathetic.

The penetrating voice went on with the reading, and once or twice the crowd applauded, though not with spirit. The theatrical figure of the sneering senator leaning against the doorway did not stir, nor did the look upon his face depart. The chilling blasts came oftener from the hills and fluttered the black coat-tails of the speaker about his long and spare figure, the thin-blooded old men shivered in their heavy clothes, and the ancient Chief Justice drew his head down into his collar like a mouse going into its hole.

My eyes wandered a moment from the President's face to the city about us. The Capitol rose above us white and gleaming, despite the clouds, and along the hills and slopes were other structures, massive and built for time, but the old and civilized was still jostled by the new and untamed. The crowd itself was shabby in the main; many of the men on the platform and near it, names of note in the nation, were careless in dress, and seemed to take little thought of appearances. Signs of newness were yet visible everywhere; the people stood forth in all their raw strength, unadorned, and unconscious of it, a race that had known little in its life but hard work and expected nothing else. I saw men of either section about us, and I noticed them closely; I knew how much those lank and often awkward figures could do and endure, and I felt a sudden glow of pride which the most peaceful can not escape, evil though it may be, that if they must make a war what a war they would make!

The sombre clouds threatened rain again, and the arms of the soldiers rattled as they shifted their posts; but I paid no attention, forgetting my comrades, following only the speaker, who was now near the end of his address, and confident, as I saw the light in his

eyes, that this was the man for the time and place. The crowd began to disperse, its fringe dropped off, disappearing silently. Nothing impressed me more than the lack of noise on a day usually so noisy, and it seemed fitting; perhaps the same feeling had taken hold of the careless mob. Little streams of people flowed away, and the grayness that enveloped the city swallowed them up; two or three of the old men crept from the stage and into the building, where they sought to warm their withered fingers; the lake of heads around the wooden stage diminished steadily as the streams trickled off in all directions, and I saw Tourville, Major Tyler, and their friends preparing to go.

The speaker finished, and stood a moment looking over the heads of the people, his melancholy eyes not seeing them, seeing only what was in his thoughts, and that I did not know; then he turned and walked quietly from the stage, the feeble applause quickly dying, and the crowd dispersing with little noise in the gray fog. My mind was full of the event I had just witnessed, so shabby in some of its aspects, yet so solemn and significant, and it was a minute or two before I recalled the presence of Shaftoe and Pembroke. Then Pembroke said that Elinor and her uncle and aunt were near. They were in Paul Warner's carriage, and the crowd had hidden them from us until the inauguration was over. Varian was on horseback by the carriage, and Elinor, closely wrapped in a long gray cloak, sat beside her aunt. We approached, and Varian raised his hat cheerfully.

"Was it comedy or tragedy that we have just witnessed, Mr. Kingsford?" he asked.

"Tragedy," I replied, "with perhaps a slight touch of comedy."

"I think you are right," he continued. "It is likely to be the last of its kind, and the end of anything is pathetic."

“I can not agree with you, Mr. Varian,” said Elinor, with sudden emphasis. “I believe that you and your friends will find in that melancholy, awkward man a far more powerful opponent than you expect.”

“We always defer to the opinion of a lady, even when she is wrong,” said Varian, with his most graceful bow.

“Wherein you do not compliment the lady,” replied Elinor with spirit; “if you wish to flatter us, disagree with us sometimes, as you would with men, and it will show that you take our opinions seriously.”

“I suggest that we drive on,” said Mrs. Maynard, with some asperity. “This east wind is dangerous, at least to one of my age.”

It seemed that Pembroke and I brought the east wind with us, but her request could not be disregarded, and so the carriage drove on, with Varian riding beside it, while Pembroke, Shaftoe, and I walked slowly away.

## CHAPTER VI

### AN EVENING WITH VARIAN

AFFAIRS drifted, both those of the nation and my own, which, however humble compared with the interests of thirty millions, were none the less important to me. The new President, they said, showed gleams of a crude, but rather Western humour; he had even taken in good part, so it was reported, a suggestion made by a distinguished member of his cabinet that, inasmuch as he was inexperienced, he let the aforesaid distinguished gentleman perform for him the duties of his office, and thus reign, but not rule. It was said that he received the suggestion with becoming gravity and gratitude, although he declined the kindly offer. It was argued that this showed on his part at least a sense of the superior merit of others, and therefore he was not wholly undeserving.

Meanwhile the South increased her armaments, and the sluggish North still would not believe.

I saw Elinor several times in this interval of waiting, despite the cold and scrutinizing gaze of Mrs. Maynard, who seemed to have discovered reasons why I should be subjected to a critical analysis; but I have been charged with having a stubborn nature, and I resolved that Elinor's aunt should be brought to a proper and realizing sense of my value.

About a week after the inauguration, when I had been out for a morning's ride and was returning toward

the city from the Rock Creek country, I overtook Elinor. She was breathing her chestnut mare after a sharp gallop, and her cheeks were brilliant with the exercise and the cold wind of early spring. We rode slowly toward the city.

I knew that she and her aunt expected to go home in a very short time, and I asked her if the day had been chosen. When she replied that it was only a week away I gave some suggestions about the mode of travel, feeling that I had a right to do so in such troubled times.

"But we shall not be alone," she said. "Mr. Varian is also going to the West, and he has promised us his protection. You know that he has great influence, and I do not understand how he has obtained it, but Aunt Ellen says that the members of the new Government are ready to do much for him, if he will only ask."

Her gaze met mine firmly, but the scarlet in her cheeks became brighter. I felt a burst of angry resentment because Varian seemed to have become indispensable to everybody for whom I cared, but I am thankful that I was able to control the impulse—and who was I to call free men and women to account for what they did?

"I wish often," I said, "that I could have spent a few years in Europe. Perhaps we Americans are prone to undervalue some of the graces and courtlier usages which they seem there to think so important. I wonder if this finer finish really has so much weight with men. I am quite sure that women are willing to include it among the Ten Commandments."

"I think that you are trying to draw an indictment of Mr. Varian, Henry," she replied, the scarlet again deepening in her cheeks, "and that would indicate a fear lest he might be superior in some respect." Then she continued more seriously: "This finer finish, as you call it, has its influence not only upon women, but upon

men as well, much though they may deny it. We always speak highly of a rough diamond, but I should like to ask you if a rough diamond is any better than a diamond cut and polished, or as good? I do not think so, nor do I see why Mr. Varian alone should possess these qualities of which you speak."

We were silent during the remainder of the ride, and I noticed the lithe and strong figure, and the firm face of the girl who rode beside me. She had been lately a puzzle to me. I fancy that all women are always a puzzle to us, but I felt that whenever she chose a course she would be likely to pursue it. Whether I liked, then, that quality in her I could not say.

I paid my promised visit to Varian on the evening of the same day. His rooms were the most beautiful that I had entered in Washington, and notable among all the articles gathered there from many regions was the collection of swords, daggers, and knives that adorned his walls. I believe that every nation and tribe had sent a weapon.

"*Spolia opima*, Kingsford," he said, following my eyes and laughing; "but I hope you will not think my fondness for sharp edges is an index to my character. I wish to add, too, that this luxury which you see is merely for the eye. I really live like a soldier. Look through that open door there and behold my bedroom. Is it not furnished with entire simplicity?"

A faint apology seemed to be lurking in his tone, but I had never accused him even silently of effeminacy. There was nothing in his manner to suggest it, and, as he said truly, the luxury of his chambers was the luxury of the eye and not of the body.

I heard much laughter and talk in the next room.

"Our friends," he said. "You are the last to arrive."

We passed into the adjoining apartment, and I found that in truth a cheerful company was assembled

there, and, as was fit and natural, its centre was Major Titus Tyler, of Mississippi, radiant with good humour and describing minutely and at length the manner in which he, assisted by some companies of soldiers, repulsed the great charge of the Mexican cavalry at Buena Vista. The listening circle was composed of Pembroke, Tourville, Charlie Mason, a Pennsylvanian, and two men whom I did not know. One of the latter was young and apparently a Frenchman, the other was middle-aged and certainly American. I liked the looks of the Frenchman, one of those yellow-haired, blue-eyed Gauls, from the north of France, but the American had heavy lowering features, thin, cruel lips, and teeth like a wolf's.

"Monsieur Henri Louis Raoul Auguste de Courcelles, of Brittany and Paris," Varian said ornately, nodding toward the Frenchman, "this is Mr. Kingsford; you are two friends of mine who ought to know each other."

The Frenchman smiled and showed his white teeth as the syllables of his long name flowed off Varian's lips. I judged that its length troubled him little, and knowing that I would like him, I hoped that he would like me as well.

"De Courcelles was a lieutenant of mine in some little diplomatic affairs abroad," said Varian; "and he is to take my place here while I go South to get myself perforated by a Yankee bullet."

Then he introduced the second man briefly as Mr. Covin Blanchard, also, more or less, an associate of his in a diplomatic way. Mr. Blanchard said nothing, but made his acknowledgments with a curt nod. He seemed to have the gift of silence, and I gave him credit for it, not wishing, however, to continue the acquaintance.

"The Mexican cavalry were advancing at a gallop, the pennons and steel of their lances glittering and flashing in the sunlight," said Major Tyler. "The



thunder of hoofs was like the roar of a coming hurricane, and drawing my sword, I——”

“While the cavalry are coming, suppose that we take a little wine, major,” said Varian, putting his hand on Major Tyler’s shoulder in the most friendly manner. “A stimulant will give strength at such a critical moment for the shock.”

“Just what I would have proposed,” replied Major Tyler, with zest; “and, Mr. Varian, you are a true military genius.”

A servant brought the wine, but Varian himself poured it, holding the bottle high and letting a thin, red stream flow into the glass.

“This wine had its origin on a German hillside, and it has found its flavour in a German cellar,” he said. “I fear, too, that your Government has collected no duty upon it. I make the avowal without shame, such an achievement being one of the weaknesses of human nature. Perhaps you do not drink much wine, Mr. Kingsford. Few Americans do. It is only the older and more advanced nations that use it habitually. I think that you can measure the civilization of any people by its taste in wine. In truth, it is the only infallible test. When a race is young, strong, rough, and boisterous, it likes whisky, beer, and other crude liquors, but when it grows old, polite, and discriminating, it develops a fine taste in wine. If you apply this test you will find that the French are the most highly civilized people in the world, a fact which can not be denied, and the Spanish and Austrians come next. It shows also that the English are the least civilized people in Europe, although they are at the same time the strongest.”

“And continuing your argument,” I said, “we, I suppose, are the last of all the white races in civilization?”

“Undoubtedly,” he replied; “but let me add, Mr.



Kingsford, that civilization, in my opinion, consists chiefly of forms; and forms, as all of us know, are often deceitful. I would never undertake to say that the most highly civilized nation is the best. Your glasses, gentlemen! Mr. Kingsford, let us drink, each to his heart's best wish."

He looked straight into my eyes as he lifted his glass, and I met his gaze with a resolution that mine should not waver, for I understood his meaning. He paused when the glass was near his lips, and repeated, still keeping his eyes on mine: "Each to his heart's best wish, Mr. Kingsford!" I drank, and repeated: "Each to his heart's best wish, Mr. Varian!"

"Which ought to mean to those who are or expect to become soldiers," said De Courcelles, "glory on the battlefield and a true sweetheart at home. Mr. Varian has just given to us Frenchmen the credit of the highest civilization, although he would seem to deny us the greatest morality, and perhaps we have acquired through the former a sense of discrimination which tells us what constitutes genuine happiness. France is too old to have any illusions about happiness, although she may be mistaken sometimes in her choice of means to obtain it."

"Such distinctions are too fine for me," said Major Tyler, shaking his head sorrowfully. "I only know that when the thunder of the Mexican cavalry grew louder, and our companies preparing themselves for the shock rallied around me, I——"

He was interrupted by Varian, who sat down at the piano and began to play. A year ago I would have considered a piano in a man's rooms a mark of effeminacy, taking the thought from the surroundings of my youth, but I had learned better, knowing, too, as it had been told to me, that the rough diamond was not necessarily better than the cut and polished gem.

He played new music, a music that I had never

heard before, a strange, wailing note that pierced the heart at first like a human voice in agony, but, growing louder and louder, changed into a song of joy, swelling like the crash of the sea, then dying away with a last faint echo.

"Who composed that?" asked Pembroke.

"A mad German musician," replied Varian. "At least, the other composers call him mad, although I suspect the next generation will swear that he is a master genius."

We asked him to play again, but he dismissed the subject with easy indifference, saying: "It is only a trifle or two that I know; I have no real skill, and I should be ashamed to touch a key in the presence of a master."

Then he talked of books and art, and I noticed that wherever he led the conversation the others followed as if he had chosen the very subject of which they wished to speak. The charm of his manner was over them all. He had personal magnetism, and whatever he said they felt at once that it was true. I noticed, too, what the rest of the company did not, that always he spoke directly to me.

"Do you play, Mr. Kingsford? Perhaps you would oblige us," he asked, nodding toward the piano.

I confessed that I could not, and I admitted, too, my unfamiliarity with other topics upon which he led the talk. Once he shrugged his shoulders slightly, but said nothing.

"We haven't had time yet," said Pembroke, "to acquire all the more graceful arts."

"But you will acquire them," said De Courcelles. "There is a dash of the French spirit in your nature which will make you an improvement on the Anglo-Saxon of Europe, a bulldog of a more handsome breed. We Frenchmen are egotistical, but how can we help it with such good cause?"

We laughed, and Varian, taking a foil, began to show us swordsmanship as it was practised in the best schools of Europe. He held, so he said, that the finer arts could not save if those requiring skill and courage were not practised at the same time, and we agreed with him. I admired the strength and suppleness of his wrist, the light balancing of his strong figure, and the alert eyes, as he showed us the latest tricks in thrust and parry.

"The sword is more ornamental than useful to an officer in battle," he said, "and the duel has been abolished in England. Here, I understand, it is now practised only in the South, and even there is often an impromptu affair; but it has claims to consideration. I think sometimes that it should have remained a respected institution. It was the world's most sovereign remedy for idle and malicious tongues, and the edge of the tongue has done more harm than the edge of the sword. Preserve the latter, and perhaps we should not have the former."

He turned presently to me and said:

"You are a Kentuckian, Mr. Kingsford, and they practise there all the manly arts, including the appeal to arms for the sake of honour. Perhaps you would try the foils with me a little? Do you know the sword?"

My father had been a swordsman in his time, and he trained me, not with the expectation of use, but as a gentle accomplishment. I do not think that Varian expected me to accept, but he smiled when I said that I would take a foil and stand before him.

"I would not do it, Henry," said Pembroke in a low tone, when Varian went into the next room for the masks. "You will appear at a disadvantage."

"Others doubtless think so too," I replied, "but I may be a better swordsman than you think, Pembroke."

Varian in a slight tone of instruction, which I did not appear to notice, advised me how to adjust my mask,

and then, taking our foils in hand, we stood before each other.

"I will look after Mr. Kingsford," said De Courcelles, "and by my lady's smile, I like his position. Surely he learned that from some one taught in the school of the French masters."

"Will you do a similar good work for me, Mr. Pembroke?" asked Varian, and Pembroke moved to his side of the room.

I felt my blood leaping higher than a mere friendly passage at arms gave warrant, and I tightened my fingers on the hilt of the foil. Varian's eyes flashed between the bars of his mask, and I thought that I saw in them the glitter of malice. He would show his superiority, and I resented the intent.

"Not quite so tight," said De Courcelles to me. "You strain the muscles and your wrist loses its elasticity."

I nodded my thanks for his friendly warning, and relaxed my grasp a little. It had been the result of feeling and not of calculation. Then we began to fence, Varian thrusting straight at my heart, as if he would touch me there with the button and show what he really could do were the game in earnest. I parried, and his foil slipped off mine. The slight, ringing sound of steel was in the air. I had not taken my eyes from his and I saw them flash again through the bars of his visor, but with a look of surprise. And that look gave me joy. This may seem a little thing, but I had chafed at his air and manner as he intended that I should, and I summoned to my use whatever skill and strength I might possess, resolving that I would defeat him were it possible.

He thrust again, and a second time I parried, his foil slipping off mine. This left him unguarded, and I thrust quickly in return. Only an agile step to one side saved him, and the look of malice from the bars of the

visor flashed upon me again. I felt a sudden great exhilaration, unwarranted, perhaps, by the circumstances, and yet not to be checked. We paused a few minutes, and Varian said politely:

"You fence well, Mr. Kingsford. I expected to find a pupil, but instead I meet a master."

I bowed as I was bound to acknowledge such a graceful compliment, and De Courcelles said:

"I am proud of my principal. I am really happy to be his second."

And De Courcelles looked as if he meant his words.

The interest of the others in our little mimic battle increased, and they hung upon it as if it were for life. We began again, and Varian became more careful, leaving no opening, and attempting to drive me back toward the wall. While cautious, he also pushed the combat, evidently wishing to end it with a quick victory. His attack was so strong that I retreated a yard or two, but I remembered two or three of the old tricks of my father's. I lowered my sword for a moment, and when he thrust quick as a flash for the opening, I knew that my chance had come. His foil, caught on mine, was drawn from his hand to fall ringing upon the floor, and my button touched him fairly over the heart.

"Well done! well done! Monsieur Kingsford, by my faith, 'twas well done!" cried De Courcelles, clapping his hands in delight. "Had the duel been real, you would now be a dead man, Monsieur Varian!"

"Happily for me it was not real," said Varian, taking off his mask, and offering me his hand. "You have now the victory, Mr. Kingsford, and I do not say it merely as an attempt to praise my own skill when I call you a good swordsman."

His words and tone were graceful enough, and yet I detected some annoyance in his manner, as unreasonable, perhaps, as my own secret joy, and when we turned to other subjects he seemed to have lost part of his zest.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SHEEN OF THE SPEARS

THE conversation lagged after my little triumph, and I rose presently to go home. Pembroke, Tourville, and Mason said that they would go too, and Varian suggested that he and his friends accompany us, at least part of the way.

So we threw on our cloaks and walked into the street. Finding the night pleasant, the chill of early spring being tempered by a gentle southern wind, and many stars shining, we strolled on together.

"I have such a sense of vastness here, gentlemen," said De Courcelles, looking up at the skies, "but, I do not know whether it is that your country is so large or merely a trick that the imagination plays me because I learned in school of its great size."

"It is the imagination only," said Varian. "The country is about to be divided, and yet your sense of vastness is not diminished. Ah, see that signal light! and there goes another! and a third!"

Our eyes followed his pointing forefinger, and we saw far beyond the Potomac a red light shoot up, hang blazing for a moment against the sky of dusky blue, and then bursting into a spray of fire, sink and die away. It was followed by another, and then another, and then more until we counted six in all.

"Some of our Southern friends holding a little quiet conversation with each other," said Varian. "It may



mean something important, or it may be merely young militiamen seizing a chance to burn fireworks. But you see, Mr. Kingsford, what a fatal mistake you are making. The Southern armies are already gathering almost within sight of the capital, and your Northern Government is supine. Come with us! Come with the men whose courage and energy are a proof of what they will do. You are a Southerner yourself, and you should cling to your own people. The agreeable and the right go together in this case."

I shook my head. It might be pleasanter to go with one's own people, but I had settled that question long since. We were a little in advance of the others, and he turned to me suddenly.

"Have you ever thought," he asked, "how your choice would affect you with Miss Maynard?"

I fancy that I looked my surprise at his use of Elinor's name in such a conversation, but I suppressed it in a moment, though secretly wondering at his motive in asking the question, and replied:

"Miss Maynard believes as I do, despite her surroundings. We are in agreement upon that point."

"Ah, yes, she thinks so for the present, but you do not know how easy it is to change a woman's political opinions, and how much pressure can be brought to bear upon her. I do not mean it as a criticism, but rather as a compliment when I say that Miss Maynard is likely to be, a year from now, an enthusiastic adherent of the South. Believe me, Mr. Kingsford, you would be much wiser to seek your fortune with us."

His manner was most ingratiating, and I do not know what reply I should have made, but at that moment Tourville interrupted. He had overtaken us and caught the latter part of Varian's speech. His comment surprised me even more than Varian's invitation.

"I think you are wrong, Mr. Varian," he said posi-

tively. "If Henry believes that the South is wrong and the North is right, he ought to go with the North. Now, I know that the South is right, but you can't convince Henry; I've tried it and failed."

I was glad enough that Tourville had spoken, although he and I had had some fiery altercations on this very subject. It was always hard to tell which way his impulsive nature would swing him, but now it brought him to my side.

"I shall not argue with you, Mr. Tourville," said Varian, with entire good nature. "Two are too strong for me, but I shall ask you to go with me to the railway station. Many Southerners start to-night on a pilgrimage, and the spectacle should be interesting."

Then he told us that more than one hundred people were leaving on a special train for their homes in the South. I knew that many of them expected to return, but not to the capital of a united nation. His proposal was acceptable to all, our curiosity rising at once, and we changed our course.

I would have walked with De Courcelles, whom I wished to know better, but Varian held me with his conversation, seeming resolved that I should receive his whole attention that evening. However, my mind wandered from the subject as we talked. I felt that our little company was of a various character, of more than one nation, divided in regard to the coming struggle, and yet we were able to walk peacefully together. I wished that our example might serve.

We soon reached the station. It was a gloomy enough place, like all American railroad stations of the time, without the slightest ornamentation, with only the barest comforts, and not all of them; dusty brown walls, hard wooden benches, and an old stove emitting more smoke than heat, feebly attempting to warm the desolate room.

But the place was full of bustle and noise, and the



dim lights showed many human faces. Men and women alike were going home, but, as I had thought, most of them were expecting to return. They talked much, and they were cheerful. It seemed never to occur to any one in that sanguine crowd that the result might be otherwise than they wished. Our own party was silent. Perhaps our discussions made us think more of the difficulties and dangers.

"You see how futile your Government is," said Varian. "Many of these men are going away to fight you, and you know it; but you do nothing. What can you do? How can you hold a people who do not wish to be held?"

Another crowd began to gather about the station, a hostile and threatening crowd containing many roughs, men who might use violence. The emigrants, or exiles, as they called themselves, often talked rashly or with excessive heat, but both sides had abstained so far from physical force. Yet it looked as if the rule might be broken now.

A short, thick figure came out of the darkness, and the light fell upon the large head and powerful shoulders of Shaftoe.

"It's curiosity that brought me here," he said. "The same curiosity, I guess, that brought you."

Some of us he knew, and I introduced him to the others.

"A fine specimen of your peasant class, I take it," said De Courcelles aside.

"On the contrary, he belongs to our nobility, although he has no title," I replied. I could never conceive of such a man as Shaftoe as a peasant, and, moreover, I disliked the word.

The mutterings of the crowd increased, and the departing Southerners, while taking no notice otherwise, used in their talk to each other allusions and jests that could not fail to irritate. It was unwise, but it was

natural. I saw presently the senator from Texas, the man whose ironical face, as he leaned against the pillar at the inauguration, had impressed me so. He showed the same character now, regarding the crowd with indolent indifference, save now and then when he permitted himself a sarcastic smile. One of the roughs jeered at him, but he merely looked at the man contemptuously. The crowd pressed closer, and some came into the station. A policeman tried to keep them back, but he was outnumbered and shoved aside. "Traitors!" they shouted at the emigrants. The senator sneered, and moved his hand as if he were sweeping dirt away. One of the roughs laid hold of his collar, but the senator seized him instantly, and threw him against the wall. A rush was made for the offending Southerner, but Shaftoe sprang forward and hurled back the first man against the second.

"Stop!" he shouted. "These people must go away peacefully! I am a Northern man myself, as true as any of you, I hope, and you shall not disgrace us!"

"Your friend is bold and ready," said Varian to me, "and, moreover, he is right. I shall help him."

All of us stepped forward to the assistance of Shaftoe; and the crowd paused. The roughs looked us over, and, convinced by our numbers and strength, departed with their bruised comrade.

Then the emigration continued. The attack of the mob became a forgotten episode. The crowd resumed its light-heartedness and gaiety. Some one looking out at the capital with its lights twinkling in the dusk, quoted the words of the Numidian leaving old Rome, "O venal city, about to perish!" but I remembered that it was the Numidian who came back to die in a dungeon at Rome, and Rome went on. I could not see that any of these people were troubled; they seemed to anticipate nothing but good fortune, and it struck me that the gravest moments of our lives are perhaps those

that create the smallest apprehensions. It was obvious, however, that they felt they were in the right. They were firm in the belief that the North was wholly given up to a sordid commercialism, and that the grace and beauty of life remained in the South alone.

They were all aboard, the engine whistled, and away they went into the darkness, the lights of the train quickly dying.

"I do not wonder that you are silent and sad," said Varian to me, as we walked back toward the central part of the city. "When a scene like this impresses so much a stranger, one whose interest is not personal, as it does me, I can understand the effect that it must have upon you, who have ties alike with those who remain and those who stay."

I wondered if his sympathy were genuine, but I thanked him for it.

Elinor and Mrs. Maynard left for their home two days later under the escort of Varian, who, I was told, was to have a Confederate command in the Southwest. When I said good-bye to Elinor I could not refrain from warning her.

"Elinor," I said, "I do not trust Mr. Varian."

"Perhaps he does not trust you, and so you are even," she said, looking at me with a quick smile.

"I do not seek to jest," I replied, "but I could wish on your account that Mrs. Maynard had sought the advice and protection of any other."

"Perhaps I am able to take care of myself," she said, her cheeks reddening and a flash appearing in her eyes. I saw that I had made a mistake, and I talked of other things. I remember her now as she was on that last day, tall and slender and beautiful, and not like those who had gone away in the night, laughing and full of eager anticipations, but grave and sad and seeming to look ahead to events which could furnish no triumph.

Mrs. Maynard gave me a cold farewell. Varian was courteous, even showing warmth in his manner.

"We may meet soon, Mr. Kingsford," he said, "and if we do, it is most likely that it will be on the battle-field; then I trust that the stronger will be able to show mercy."

I noticed that the man Blanchard, his face as heavy and lowering as ever, was with him, and I liked his presence but little.

Then all my friends departed—Major Tyler, Pembroke, Mason, Tourville, and even De Courcelles, who went to New York on business for the French Government, so he said. The city was lonely when they were gone.

The war clouds thickened fast, and shots were heard.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CALL OF THE DRUM

THEN I listened to the call of the drum.

Fort Sumter was fired upon, and the first cannon shot there set this war drum to beating in every village; it was never silent; its steady roll day after day was calling men up to the cannon mouth; it was persistent, unsatisfied, always crying for more.

Its beat was heard throughout a vast area, over regions whose people knew of each other as part of the same nation, but had never met, calling above this line to the North, calling below it to the South, summoning up the legions for a struggle in which old jealousies and old quarrels, breeding since the birth of the Union, were to be settled.

The drum beat its martial note in the great cities of the Atlantic, calling the men away from the forges and the shops and the wharves—clerks, moulders, longshoremen, the same call for all; it passed on, and its steady beat resounded among the hills and mountains of the North, calling to the long-limbed farmer boys to drop the plough and take up the rifle, sending them on to join the moulders, and clerks, and longshoremen, and putting upon all one stamp, the stamp of the soldier, food for the cannon—and this food supply was to be the largest of its time, though few yet dreamed it.

The roll of the drum went on, through the fields, along the rivers, by the shores of the Great Lakes, out

upon the plains, where the American yet fought with the Indian for a foothold, and into the interminable forests whose shades hid the pioneers; over levels and acres and curves of thousands of miles, calling up the deep-chested Western farmers, men of iron muscles and no pleasures, to whom unbroken hardship was the natural course of life, and sending them to join their Eastern brethren at the cannon mouth.

It was an insistent drum, beating through all the day and night, over the mountains, through the sunless woods and on the burnt prairies, never resting, never weary. The opportunity was the greatest of the time, and the drum did not neglect a moment; it was without conscience, and had no use for mercy, calling, always calling.

Another drum and yet the same was beating in the South, and those who came at its call differed in little from the others who were marching to the Northern beat, only the clerks and the mill hands were much fewer; the same long-limbed and deep-chested race, spare alike of figure and speech, brown-faced men from the shores of the Gulf, men of South Carolina in whom the original drop of French blood still tintured the whole; brethren of theirs from Louisiana, gigantic Tennesseans, half-wild horsemen from the Texas plains—all burning with enthusiasm for a cause that they believed to be right.

This merciless drum rolling out its ironical chuckle noted that these Northern and Southern countrymen gathering to their standards were alike in their lack of pleasure; they were a serious race; life had always been a hard problem for them, a fight, in fact, and this fight into which they were going was merely another kind of battle, with some advantages of novelty and change and comradeship that made it attractive, especially to the younger, the boys. They had been hewers of wood and drawers of water in every sense of the word, though



for themselves; generations of them had fought Indians, some suffering torture and death; they had endured bitter cold and burning heat, eaten at scanty tables, and lived far-away and lonely lives in the wilderness. They were a rough and hard-handed race, taught to work and not to be afraid, knowing no masters, accustomed to no splendours either in themselves or others, holding themselves as good as anybody and thinking it, according to Nature; their faults those of newness and never of decay. These were the men who had grown up apart from the Old World and all its traditions, far even from the influence which the Atlantic seaboard felt through constant communication. This life of eternal combat in one form or another left no opportunity for softness; the dances, the sports, and all the gaieties which even the lowest in Europe had were unknown to them, and they invented none to take their place.

They knew the full freedom of speech; what they wished to say they said, and they said it when and where they pleased. But on the whole they were taciturn, especially in the hour of trouble; then they made no complaints, suffering in silence. They imbibed the stoicism of the Indians from whom they won the land, and they learned to endure much and long before they cried out. This left one characteristic patent and decisive, and that characteristic was strength. These men had passed through a school of hardship, one of many grades; it had roughened them, but it gave them bodies of iron and an unconquerable spirit for the struggle they were about to begin.

Another characteristic of those who came at the call of the drum was unselfishness. They were willing to do much and ask little for it. They were poor bargain drivers when selling their own flesh and bones, and their answer to the call was spontaneous and without price.

They came in thousands and scores of thousands. The long roll rumbling from the sea to the Rocky Moun-

tains and beyond cleared everything; the doubts and the doubters were gone; no more committees; an end to compromises! The sword must decide, and the two halves of the nation, which yet did not understand their own strength, swung forward to meet the issue, glad that it was obvious at last.

There came an exultant note into the call of the drum, as if it rejoiced at the prospects of a contest that took so wide a sweep. Here was long and happy work for it to do; it could call to many battles, and its note as it passed from village to village was resounding and defiant; it was cheerful too, and had in it a trick; it told the long-legged boys who came out of the woods of victories and glory, of an end for a while to the toil which never before had been broken, of new lands and of cities; all making a great holiday with the final finish of excitement and reasonable risk. It was no wonder that the drum called so effectively when it mingled such enticements with the demands of patriotism. Most of those who heard were no strangers to danger, and those who did not know it themselves were familiar with it in the traditions of their fathers and forefathers; every inch of the land which now swept back from the sea three thousand miles had been won at the cost of suffering and death, with two weapons, the rifle and the axe, and they were not going to shun the present trial, which was merely one in a long series.

The drum was calling to men who understood its note; the nation had been founded as a peaceful republic, but it had gone already through the ordeal of many wars, and behind it stretched five generations of colonial life, an unbroken chain of combats. They had fought everybody; they had measured the valour of the Englishman, the Frenchman, the Spaniard, the Hessian, the Mexican, and the red man. Much gunpowder had been burned within the borders of the Union, and also its people had burned much beyond them. Those who fol-



lowed the call of the drum were flocking to no new trade. By a country with the shadow of a standing army very many battles had been fought.

They came, too, without regard to blood or origin; the Anglo-Saxon predominated; he gave his characteristics to North and South alike, all spoke his tongue, but every race in Europe had descendants there, and many of them—English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, Spanish, and so on through the list—their blood fused and intermingled, until no one could tell how much he had of this and how much of that.

The untiring drumbeat was heard through all the winter and summer, and the response still rolled up from vast areas; it was to be no common struggle—great armies were to be formed where no armies at all existed before, and the preparations on a fitting scale went on. The forces of the North and South gathered along a two-thousand-mile line, and those trying to look far ahead saw the nature of the struggle.

The preliminary battles and skirmishes began, and then the two gathered themselves for their mightiest efforts.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PENETRATION OF SHAFTOE

SHAFTOE and I were two among the thousands who obeyed the call of the drum, and we went together to Kentucky, I finding again on the journey that I had chosen wisely when I resolved to make him my comrade. I was grateful, too, that he saw fit to help me out of the store of his experience and wisdom, falling in with my plan, for I felt that I was the one who received benefits and gave but little in return. He began now to instruct me in the arts of the campaigner.

"You are to be a soldier soon," he said, "and so you will have to begin life over again. You really know nothing about taking care of yourself. No man does until he has served at least two years as a private. Unless I watch over you you are sure to have shoes either too tight or too loose, and inside of a week you will be so lame you can't walk. You will go to sleep on the damp ground just because you are so tired that you stop thinking, and the next day you will have chills and fever. In short, you will be dead before you hear the whistle of an enemy's bullet if you don't take good advice, which, of course, is mine."

I promised him that I would obey all his instructions, and his pleasure at my assurance was obvious. Where his military knowledge was concerned he showed a fine strain of egotism, but it proceeded from such good cause that it seemed logical and natural. Moreover, he

took no credit to himself for anything else, and I like to see a man proud of the work that he can do best. I found that he was not an easy master at first. His discipline was severe, and if I failed to tell what I ought to do in any military emergency, his criticism was instant and emphatic. "This little West Point of mine must be carried on right," he said. "I haven't had a chance to lecture anybody for a long time before, and don't you think that I'm going to let it pass."

Yet I knew that he liked me, as otherwise he would not have taken so much trouble to make me a good soldier.

We went by rail to Cincinnati, where I received a letter from Elinor. I had asked her to write to me there, and tell me of her safe arrival. Her letter was brief:

"We reached here without trouble or long delay," she said. "We heard of nothing on our way but war, and the talk of great battles soon to come. Colonel Varian—he is a colonel now, his commission came from Mr. Davis himself, and he is esteemed highly in the South—was most kind and assisted us in many ways. But he was rather silent and reserved, and we have seen little of him since our arrival here. Henry, I trust that you will come to no harm in this war, and that the war itself will soon be ended, for it seems a cruel thing."

I thought over the letter for a while, not being able to tell from it Elinor's feelings toward Varian. Shaftoe was close by when I received it, smoking, and presently I saw him take his pipe out of his mouth and look fixedly at me. Being so much older and more experienced than I, he felt that he could take liberties. At length he said:

"A' girl?"

Silence.

"Not *a* girl, but *the* girl."

Silence.

Private Thomas Shaftoe, U. S. A., relighted his pipe and smoked for a minute or two with great deliberation, but did not take his translating eye off me.

"I was sure it was *the* girl and not *a* girl," he said presently.

Still silence.

"A mighty soldier such as you are to become would never be disturbed so much by anything except *the* girl."

I stirred a little, for I was uneasy under his gaze.

"That's confirmation," said Shaftoe. "Now, I want to ask you one thing. Aren't you afraid the war will lag through a division of your attention? Perhaps it may cause the North to suffer several great defeats."

The veteran pulled calmly at his pipe and looked with seeming laziness through the rising smoke. But his keen eyes were on me, and I believe that they read every thought passing in my mind. It had become Shaftoe's opinion lately that I was taking life with a seriousness and intensity bordering upon strain, and I felt that he wished to indulge his humour a little at my expense.

"You wonder why I know about the girl—that is, *the* particular girl and not *a* girl," he resumed. "It's easy enough to know; I didn't have to hunt up the fact; you advertised it to me in billboard letters a yard high, all in red ink. The only way for me not to see it was to shut my eyes tight, and I can't keep that up twenty-four hours a day."

He laughed silently, but with enjoyment.

"Oughtn't I to know the signs?" he resumed. "Haven't I been through it all? Yes, sir, every stage of the disease from catch to cure! There she stands now, nineteen years old, as spry as a deer and as wild, black eyes and black hair, cream on her brow and roses on her cheeks and mischief in her soul. I was sure I'd die or kill somebody if I didn't marry her. Neither happened."

"Why didn't you marry her?"

"Asked her, but she preferred to marry some one else. That was long ago. I got over it, as you will get over your attack, my son."

Private Thomas Shaftoe, U. S. A., laughed again, and blew a smoke ring high above his head. Then he added:

"At least the United States got a first-class soldier by it, if I do say it myself."

Then he seemed to sigh, but so softly that I could not hear him; I doubt if he heard himself.

It was our intention to continue the journey by rail from Cincinnati to Louisville, but we found the trains from the former place choked with volunteers and material of war, and so we secured passage on the packet steamer *Island Queen* down the Ohio, arriving at Louisville the next day in safety.

I was more or less acquainted in Louisville, and I beheld here for the first time and on a large scale the painful division of families, which I believe that all acknowledge to be the saddest feature of a civil war. Shaftoe left me on the second day, going to Indiana, where he was to assist in the organization and drill of a new regiment. Some Indiana troops were already in Louisville, tall, gawky young countrymen, and the Kentuckians, with that contempt which they always feel for the Indianians—a contempt which has nothing to do with the respective merits of the two—hooted them as they walked through the streets and asked them what they were. I shall not forget the reply. "We are free citizens of the State of Indiana," answered the Hoosiers proudly, remembering that the Kentuckians were slaveholders and they were not. And yet, by another of the contradictions of human nature, those Indianians came from a county which to this day will not allow a negro to remain twenty-four hours on its soil.

I was in a state of uncertainty. I wished to visit my

grandmother before entering upon active service, but I could not yet learn whether a man known to be a volunteer for the Northern army having visited that part of the State would be able to return to his duty. I took, meanwhile, a room at the Galt House, and on the second day when I went to breakfast I met Varian. He saw me first, and came to my table, offering his hand with a cheerful good morning.

"I had heard that you were here, Mr. Kingsford," he said. "Our careers, or rather our wishes, seem to take us along the same path."

I was forced to return his greeting in kind, although surprised and not wholly pleased to see him there. Elinor had written that he was already a colonel in the Confederate service, and surely he must know his risk in coming to Louisville.

He invited me to join Mr. Blanchard and himself at his table, and I found Mr. Blanchard there, silent and lowering as ever. Varian, talking freely, gave me much news, and despite the gaiety of his manner, I noticed a thread of irony which seemed to me at times to become marvellously like bitterness.

The southern part of the State, he said, was swarming with the Confederate forces. Mrs. Maynard and her niece were at their house, and my respected grandmother, so he said, was quietly at hers, very anxious about me and hoping to see me soon. Miss Maynard was still of divided feelings, loving the South and yet sure that the North was right and would win. He had sought in vain to convert her to sounder political and military beliefs, but women were guided in these matters as in all others by their emotions, or by that instinct which usually leads them wrong, rather than by their reason. I was not sure that a woman's instinct usually led her wrong, and I said so.

"At any rate," he replied lightly, "a man can not depend upon them. Just when he thinks he has con-



vinced them, he is sure to find that they think the very opposite. Perhaps it is the fine contrariety of the sex that makes them so beautiful to us."

I watched his face with new interest, but it expressed no emotion, and he began to talk of other subjects. I asked him why he had come to Louisville, and was he not afraid of detention.

"It is necessary in this life to have strong friends," he replied, shrugging his shoulders, "and perhaps I have them. At all events, I feel no apprehensions. The war has not really begun, although all of us know that it will begin." Then he discussed the military situation, talking to me quite frankly, telling me that Kentucky was a pivotal State, and whichever side could hold it would drive a wedge into the heart of the other. Possession, he said, would be the prize of swiftness and decision, and so far the South had shown herself superior in those qualities. He described the campaign as he would conduct it for the South if he were in chief command, and it seemed to me that his was a true military genius, since his tone had the ring of knowledge and confidence, and one was convinced in spite of himself.

"I could wish, Mr. Varian," I said, "that you would choose our side."

"Not so much as I wish you to take ours," he replied.

I thanked him for the compliment, and presently tried to engage his companion, the sullen Mr. Blanchard, in conversation. But if Mr. Blanchard had any ideas worth the telling, he was pleased to consider them better worth the keeping, as he made but brief replies to all my questions and suggestions, and Varian resuming the thread of the conversation, he was left to his original silence.

Varian asked me if I intended a visit to my home, and I said that I would surely go if I found the way to



be open. He made no comment, but left the room a few moments later with Blanchard.

I inquired the next morning for him, but I found that he and his familiar were gone, and I learned from others that his flight was hastened by the danger of arrest. The rumour was spreading that a man, already a colonel in the Southern service, was in the city, possibly as a spy, and while one might tolerate much before active hostilities, this was going too far.

I decided the next day that I would visit my home, taking the chances of detention and capture, and an hour after forming this resolution I started.

## CHAPTER X

### A SOUTHERN HOME

"I KNEW that you ought not to come, but I knew that you would come, and right glad am I to see you," said my grandmother.

She stood in the doorway, a woman of sixty-five, just a little above the medium height, her iron-gray hair—it was not white until years afterward—arranged in little corkscrew curls on her temples, her gray eyes still clear, and the full brow above them almost as smooth as the forehead of a young woman. She was as straight as an Indian chief, and I can remember that when I first came to live with her she was, to my childish mind, the personification of strength and self-reliance. People told me that she was a far sterner character than my mother, who died when I was at the age of seven, but when she sent for me, we two being all that were left of the family, they said also, as I learned afterward, that I had fallen into safe hands.

My grandmother when the lone little boy arrived kissed me on the forehead, then looking into my eyes fixedly for a moment, said:

"Ah, yes; it is the same look."

Then she went abruptly into the next room, leaving me wondering and frightened. But she returned in a few moments, brisk, sharp, and snappy.

"William Penn!" she cried, "why do you leave the child to starve?"

And William Penn Johnson, the man of all work, my grandmother's right hand, came in to rescue me from the pangs of starvation, although it was she who had been guilty, if there was any guilt at all.

"Don't give up to her too easy," said William Penn, when he had taken me to the kitchen, where a kindly maid supplied me plentifully with bread and butter. "She's a terrible woman with those who are afraid of her. She thinks they have no spirit, and she hates people who have no spirit. You needn't cross her, but just you be foxy; let her talk and think she's getting her way, while you have yours, and then you'll lead a quiet life, which is the only kind that's worth living."

This was blunt advice to give to a young man of seven years, but even then I was wise enough to receive it with a grain of allowance, and to profit by the good that it really contained. Thus I prospered under a stern and kindly rule, sharing in youthful spirit in the feud that my grandmother conducted with her neighbour, Mrs. Maynard, a quarrel which had become necessary to her personal satisfaction; and all went well until Mrs. Maynard's orphan niece arrived from the North.

"A New England child, a Yankee!" said my grandmother in horror. "Perhaps her parents were abolitionists. Yet I might have expected that Ellen Maynard would bring her here. It is like the woman to defy the best opinion of the community. Henry, you must never go near that house again."

She laid this injunction upon me with the greatest earnestness and weight, but my curiosity was aroused so deeply that I was ready to risk the sin of disobedience. I had never seen a Yankee, though I had heard strange tales of them, and so I slipped away from our house, and a half hour later was peeping through the palings of the fence that surrounded Mrs. Maynard's lawn. I saw a little girl three or four years younger than myself,

a child with blue eyes and black hair, and of most wonderful complexion. She was a stranger to me, but I beckoned to her, and she came obediently.

"Little girl," I said, "there is a terrible Yankee here. My grandmother told me so, and I want to see the Yankee. I never saw one in my life."

She looked into my eyes with those blue eyes of hers, laughed, and said:

"I'm the terrible Yankee."

And yet, in spite of all my early education and acquired prejudices, I was forced to admit that she did not look terrible. I conceded in truth that she was a very pretty little girl, and might become a good comrade. I unlearned then much of my previous knowledge, nor did I know until I was a man how great my awakening had been.

My grandmother and Mrs. Maynard fought against our youthful friendship. The former's feelings of a lifetime against Yankees could not be swept away in an hour, and, moreover, she did not wish her only grandson to be the playmate of Ellen Maynard's niece. But youthful perseverance triumphed. When Madam Arlington, my grandmother, saw the pretty face and modest ways of the little maid, she relented gradually. "Ah, well," she said, "she could not help the misfortune of her birth in New England, and perhaps she came away before she was old enough to be corrupted. The poor child is to be pitied, not blamed."

After this Elinor steadily made progress in the stern old woman's heart. I was in a fair way myself to become spoiled. I hunted often in the old library for stories on the long lonesome days when I had no one with whom to play, and I gathered a strange assortment of bookish knowledge, much to my grandmother's pride, as I soon discovered. The minister, always a man of distinction and honour in our State, was at our dinner table, and unwisely made an excursion into ancient

history, quoting a date and quoting it wrong, as I knew, since it was one of those miscellaneous and chance facts that I had gathered in my bookish excursions. I corrected him promptly, and in a loud voice, somewhat to his confusion, and more to that of my grandmother. When the dinner was over and the minister had gone I received severe attentions with a willow switch, which I endured without a tear, and after my grandmother had dismissed me William Penn informed me confidentially that she had boasted of my learning to the whole household, and asserted that her grandson was to become a scholar. I know she cherished an ambition that I should some day write a book, and that she would be the first to read it.

I risked my favour again, a year or two after this, when she found me reading old histories.

"Put them down, Henry," she said sternly. "Those histories are written by Yankees, and of course are lies. You ought to read histories written by Southern men."

"But, grandmother," I protested, "the Southern men don't write books."

"That is true," she replied with a sigh; "and so the world will never know the truth about the South, but will always believe that the Yankees have done everything."

I think that her ambition for me then took definite shape. The book that I was to write was to be a great history, setting forth the grand and glorious deeds of the South, and describing its surpassing virtues. Perhaps I never understood how deep her grief was when a few years later I began to express opinions differing in many important respects from hers.

"It's those books," she said. "I ought to have burned them; or it's that Yankee girl. I should never have let her come into my house. They say there's no fool like an old fool, and I say so too, unless it's a young one."

I feared for a time that she might speak rudely to Elinor, but I ought to have known better. My grandmother never forgot that she was a gentlewoman.

When I was a man grown and the gulf began to open between North and South I told her, thinking it was best to leave no illusions, that if war came I should take the side of the North. She stared fixedly at the wall, her face quite gray, and at length said:

"I have long known it. God's will be done!"

She scarcely spoke for the next two days, but on the morning of the third she said, with some return of her old cheerfulness:

"I never dreamed that the North could be right in any particular, but surely it can not be wholly wrong, for I hear that Ellen Maynard is claiming to be the best Southerner of us all."

Her cheerfulness continued to increase, and by and bye she was her old, strong, reliant self, and William Penn, who had enjoyed a period of rest and peace unknown to him for years before, was roused again to a life of activity.

"William Penn," I asked, "if the war comes, as it surely will, shall you go to it?"

"Henry," said truthful William, looking at me in amazement, "I have served Madam Arlington faithfully for thirty years, and I think that I have done my share."

It had been fifteen years since I first came into my grandmother's house, but when she met me now she looked only a little older and grayer, and as erect and strong as ever. Just as on that earlier day, she kissed me on the forehead, looked into my eyes, and said: "It is the same look; they are Mary's eyes." Then that old scene suggested by the same emotions reproduced itself. Again she went into the next room, leaving me alone, and when she came back, she called loudly:

"William Penn, shall the boy starve, when he has



come perhaps at the risk of his life to see us? Why do you leave him here alone?"

And William Penn came forth, also a little older and a little grayer, but with no loss of strength, and was ready to see that all the house contained was at my service. Then my grandmother told me the tale of her narrow world, interspersing the narrative with brief and crisp commentaries after her fashion.

"Ellen Maynard is at her home," she said, "saying little and taking no part in the disputes that agitate the neighbourhood. She must mean mischief. Elinor is there. The girl has been to see me once only, and she looked pale and troubled. There is a stranger too—a man of distinguished appearance and great manners, they say—who is often at the house, and he is in high favour with Ellen Maynard. His name is Varian, and nobody knows where he comes from, but it is certain that he is to have a high command in the Southern army. I wonder what it means? Ellen Maynard is an ambitious woman and full of intrigue. I always knew that she could never be trusted. Elinor, however, is different. I don't understand how there can be such a contrast between two people of the same blood. All this does not mean any good for you, Henry. Why do you get on the wrong side? Why don't you go with those who are sure to win?"

Madam Arlington never for a moment doubted the complete triumph of the South, and I had no heart to argue with her this important point. She had not been in all her life twenty miles from the house in which she was born, but she took the keenest interest in current affairs, accepting without qualification the old fable that one Southerner could whip five Yankees. She was full of news, or rather gossip, of the great army that was gathering to the southward.

"And it is to be commanded by Albert Sidney Johnston, one of our Kentuckians—a great general, as



every one admits." This she said triumphantly, and then she added regretfully: "You ought to be on his staff, Henry. He is sure to be a victor. I know that there is always room for doubt, but I am sure that in this instance I am right."

I went to Elinor's home the next day. She came to meet me, showing unexpected warmth, and gave me both of her hands.

"I am glad to see you, Henry," she said; "but why did you come?"

Then I noticed that she was pale and undeniably anxious, as Madam Arlington had said.

"Why should I not come?" I asked.

"It is dangerous for you here," she replied.

"At your house?"

"Not here alone, but at Madam Arlington's house too, or at any other in this country."

However, I was not afraid. Yet it was pleasant to feel that she was alarmed for me. It was true that our country was much divided, but most of those who were going from it to the war had been my friends all my life, and I did not believe that they would betray me. I asked after Varian, telling her I had heard of his presence.

"Yes, he has been here more than once," she replied, "and he is somewhere in this county now with Mr. Blanchard, raising troops. Mr. Varian is a gentleman, and none need fear treachery from him; that is, I think not, but I do not trust Mr. Blanchard."

Elinor seemed anxious for me to leave at once, and urged me to return northward. But my pride was aroused. I would not flee in such haste. Many who thought as I were in the vicinity. This was debatable ground, and having come, I should feel like a coward if I fled between the first two suns. I returned an evasive answer, although it warmed my heart so much to see her apprehension on my account that I wished her to

ask me again. But she was silent, her look of anxiety remaining.

I sent my compliments to Mrs. Maynard. She did not choose to see me. Then I bade farewell to Elinor.

"You are going northward very soon, Henry," she said; "I know that you must, and we may not see each other again in a long time, or it may be never. I pray God that he will watch over you."

She spoke with such deep feeling that I took her hand and kissed it after the fashion of an earlier time, and as I turned away I saw that her eyes were full of tears. I looked back when I had gone a little distance, and she was standing in the doorway gazing after me. She waved her hand and I waved mine. Then I rode rapidly away, looking back no more.

It was clear to me from her words that she did not wish me to come again, and I respected her wish. Why she was so anxious for me to leave the country at once I did not understand; but on the next day, while I was passing through the woods only a mile from Madam Arlington's house, some one shot at me. The bullet whizzed most unpleasantly near my head; when I rushed to the spot whence the report of the weapon had come, no one was there. I would have called it an accident, the careless shot of some stray hunter, had it not been for the quick disappearance of the man. I was disturbed greatly. It is not pleasant to feel that an assassin is pursuing one. Varian and I were antagonists, and my first thought was of him; then I believed it impossible that he should commit or abet such a deed, and my mind turned to Blanchard. I distrusted the man, and yet I could not discern a motive. I continued my walk, and presently met William Penn Johnson.

"Did you hear a rifle shot, William Penn?" I asked.

"I did," he replied, "and I immediately walked at a brisk pace in the other direction. I thank God every

day that I am not a brave man, for being as I am I feel that I shall live a long and useful life, war or no war."

So saying he went contentedly about his work, and I returned to the house. It was, in truth, time that I should go, but I did not like to be driven away. I was at that age when one cares a great deal for the appearance of bravery. I said nothing about the adventure to Madam Arlington, knowing how she would be grieved and alarmed, and I still lingered, receiving on the fourth day thereafter my reward, in the shape of a second bullet, fired at me apparently at a distance of about fifty yards from behind a rail fence, the man again escaping through woods without my being able to get so much as a glimpse of him. This bullet was the nearest of all to success, passing through my clothing and grazing my shoulder. I was glad that the marksmanship of my unknown enemy was as evil as his intent. Two fair shots at me and never a hit! Yet I shivered. Could one expect always to escape such attempts? How was I to fight a hidden enemy?

When I went home to dinner I noticed Madam Arlington's keen eyes upon me. Unfortunately I had forgotten that nothing ever escaped her notice.

"Henry," she said sternly, "isn't that a hole in the shoulder of your coat?"

"Yes, grandmother," I said dutifully; "I tore it on a splinter in the barn, and I had since forgotten about it. I fear that I am becoming a sloven in spite of all your teaching and discipline."

"Henry," she continued, with increasing sternness, "come here at once!"

I rose, and standing before her, said, with great respect:

"Yes, grandmother."

She examined the rent in my coat slowly and critically.

"Henry," she said, "do you mean to tell me that when your coat strikes a splinter it tears a neat round hole like that? And it is through the waistcoat, too! Are you to begin telling me falsehoods after fifteen years under this roof?"

I flushed guiltily.

"Grandmother," I said, "I was hunting rabbits, and when I leaned my gun against a fence the trigger caught on a rail, and bang! it went. It was careless, I know, as the bullet grazed my shoulder."

She looked at me doubtfully.

"Humph!" she said. "Then you are too young for me to let you go out with a gun. Finish your dinner."

I obeyed orders with some embarrassment, and she said nothing more. I sat that evening with her, and the weather being rather warm we left open one of the windows of the room. Madam Arlington was near the lamp, busy with some fine stitching. Usually she talked a great deal, as hers was a full mind and it liked expression, but this evening she was silent. Yet I could see that her thoughts were busy, although not with her work. It occurred to me suddenly as I sat there looking at her that she must have been very beautiful in her youth. All others who knew her may have observed this long ago, but I believe we seldom pause to think whether our mothers or grandmothers are or were beautiful or ugly. Her features were regular, her hair was still glossy, and there was a complexion that once must have been brilliant. Her chief characteristic now was strength. Perhaps it had not always been so. I felt then how deep is the misfortune of women left alone.

Madam Arlington suddenly laid down her stitching and turned her eyes to the open window.

"There is some one coming, Henry," she said; "a rider who comes fast!"

"I hear nothing, grandmother," I replied.

"I am nearest the window," she said, "and I hear distinctly the beat of horses' feet. It means you. O Henry, why did you stay so long? And yet I am to blame, for I should have made you go."

She rose and the stitching fell unheeded to the floor. Her face expressed the deepest alarm. I sought to reassure her, feeling that her fears were caused solely by her apprehensions for me.

"Come to the window," she said, "and you can hear."

I obeyed, and then the tramp of a horse ridden rapidly reached me.

"They intend to arrest you," cried Madam Arlington. "Run, Henry! There is time yet to escape from the back of the house. No, there is only one coming, and I would not have a grandson of mine flee from a single man!"

The spirit of the pioneers who dared all the dangers of the great forests flamed up in her eyes, and she stood by the window, motionless and waiting.

The tread grew louder, a horse and rider shot into the moonlight, stopped in front of the house, and, to our unutterable surprise, Elinor Maynard leaped down, ran to the door, and beat upon it heavily with the butt of her riding whip.

I rushed to the door and opened it. Elinor stood there, the whip still raised in her hand, her face flushed with excitement.

"You must go at once, Henry!" she cried. "They are coming for you!"

I saw then that she had ridden to warn me of some danger, and I felt a warm and grateful glow.

"But," I said, "you can not stand here. Come inside."

"Bless my soul!" cried Madam Arlington. "It's Elinor Maynard! Why, child, what errand has brought you?"

Then she seized Elinor by the arm and fairly dragged her into the house, while Elinor was crying to me to go at once, for my life. Troops were coming to seize me; they were even then on the way.

"But I am not yet in the Northern service," I said; "and even if I were, they could do nothing more than hold me as a prisoner."

"You do not know who commands them," she said. "It is Captain Blanchard, and there are others with him who bear you malice. I tell you that your life is not safe! You must go immediately, Henry!"

"And you have come to warn me?" I said.

"Why should I not?" she replied.

I was gratified and embarrassed too. I spoke of her own danger; she said there was none for her, and again she entreated me to go at once.

"I know of no one who wishes my life," I said, and as I said it I remembered the shots that had been fired at me. But if any danger really threatened I could not slip away in the dark and leave unprotected Madam Arlington and the woman who had come to save me. I uttered my objection, and my grandmother spoke with decision.

"Elinor is right," she said. "She would not have come here in the dark without reason for coming, and you must go. No protests! I will take care of her to-night, and carry her back safely in the morning. William Penn, the horses at once! You must ride with Henry as far as the river!"

It was Madam Arlington, ready, resourceful, and commanding, who now spoke. I knew that she was right. Moreover, Elinor begged me with her eyes to go, and who could resist such pleadings? William Penn had come forth obedient to the call for his services, and while I made my hasty preparations for flight he saddled and bridled two horses. In the border country between the warring sections there were thou-



sands of us on either side who fled in like haste by moonlight or no light at all, before that long war was over.

"William Penn," I asked, "are you not afraid to go with me, you who profess to be such a coward?"

"We are running from the enemy, not toward him," he replied calmly; "and that's the best way to keep out of danger."

I took Elinor's hand in mine and told her good-bye.

"Elinor," I said, "I do not go to stay. I shall come again."

"I shall pray for your safety," she said, with a sad little smile.

Then my grandmother kissed me again on the forehead after her custom. There was not a tear in her eye.

"I could wish that you had chosen the other side, Henry," she said; "but it is better to be an honourable man and be right on the wrong side than wrong on the right side. Bear that in mind. This is not new to me; your grandfather, my husband, then for a year only, fought at New Orleans, but he came back safely, as I have faith that you, too, shall come."

My heart was too full for me to say more to either; waving my hand at both I galloped away into the darkness with William Penn.

We rode for a while in silence, save the beat of our horses' feet. The night was dark and William Penn's face seemed ghostly beside me. I liked little this flight from the home of my childhood, leaving behind me, and unprotected, those whom I held most dear; but war has less to do than anything else I know of with human affections, and it was no time to mourn.

"We did not leave too soon," said William Penn ten minutes after our start. "I hear them behind us."

We stopped a moment, and bending our heads listened. The tread of a troop of horse came to my ears.

"They've been to the house, and not finding me



guessed that I would take the southern road, which was correct," I said.

"It is easy enough to turn aside in the woods and hide from them," replied William Penn.

"And perhaps be taken on the morrow," I said. "No, I shall keep straight on, and do you, William Penn, who are a man of peace, ride into the forest there and you can be safely at home again before morning."

"Oh, no," replied William Penn; "I should be frightened alone there in the darkness among the trees. If I have to run, I'd rather run in company."

I thanked him with a pressure of the hand, and saying nothing more we increased the speed of our horses. The gallop of the men behind us grew louder. Elinor had told us that Blanchard was in command of the expedition to our house, and I felt no doubt that this was his troop. She had informed us, too, that others were with him who meant me great harm.

"They are coming fast," said William Penn.

"You chose the best horses, did you not?" I asked.

"Trust me for that much," he replied.

We paused for a moment on the crest of a hillock, where the road stretched in a straight line behind us for a quarter of a mile. The cavalrymen were now near enough to see us there in the moonlight, and we heard their distant shout.

"It's four miles from here to the river, is it not, William Penn?" I asked.

"Four miles and one rod over, by the survey."

"And the river is in flood from the spring rains?"

"Yes, and there's no bridge."

"Then that's our safety line. Come! our horses are fresh, and we will show those men what it is to ride a real race."

We started at a gallop, and again we heard the distant halloo of the troopers behind us. Our horses

swung forward at a steady gait, and the forest on either side of us slid past.

"They can do better than this. I trained them myself," said William Penn, flicking the mane of his horse with his free right hand.

"I have no doubt of it," I replied, "but a waiting race is most often a winning one."

On we sped, the dark forest racing by, and our horses' feet drumming on the road. Our pursuers drew a little nearer. They raised their triumphant shout again, and their rifles began to crack. But I knew the bullets would fall short.

"William Penn," I said, "we may be under fire soon. Gallop into the woods there and you will be safe. It is not you whom they want."

"If I get wounded," he replied, turning his patient face toward me, "I want to be with a comrade who will hear my groans and tie up my wounds. None of this hero's business of dying in silence and alone for me."

His horse never swerved from the side of mine.

"They are still gaining," he said presently. "I hear their hoof beats now distinctly. Oughtn't we to hurry?"

"But our horses are by far the fresher; let us wait a little."

The exhilaration of the wild gallop entered my blood. I felt the swing of the horse under me, regular and true, as if his muscles were made of steel, and I felt no fear.

"William Penn," I said, "there are worse things than this."

"There may be, but I don't want to meet 'em."

"Think what a glorious ride!"

"I don't care for glory."

Our pursuers drew a little nearer. More shots were fired, and we heard the whine of one bullet as it sped over our heads.

"Lord forgive me, but what was that?" cried William Penn.

"A hint."

"A hint for what?"

"A hint to go a little faster."

We eased our grasp on the bridle reins and our horses shot forward. The hoof beats behind us became fainter.

"That's what I call really glorious, the dying of that sound," said William Penn. "But we can do better than this. I trained 'em myself. Come, Henry, let 'em show you how well they can do."

"Be patient, William Penn; there is yet time."

"One can be too patient, Henry. We can widen the gap between us and those men if we wish, and O Henry! how thankful I am for that gap!"

We continued for another mile at the same pace, and then William Penn made a new appeal to me to show how good the horses were. I saw that his pride was really aroused, and I gave the word. Urged on by our voices they leaped forward, and our pursuers sank back in the moonlight.

"Did I not tell you?" cried William Penn exultantly.

"You told the exact truth."

We presently saw ahead of us the silver line of the river; and then as we galloped on, the silver changed to the yellow surface of a flood running bank full.

"They will not follow us across the river—and now good-bye, William Penn," I said. "You have been a good and faithful comrade. No one could have been truer."

"I shall cross the river, too," he said. "If they won't follow you to the other side, they won't follow me either, and I've been pursued enough to-night."

We urged our horses into the flood and, swimming with strong and steady stroke, they soon reached the

further shore. Our pursuers, as we had expected, stopped at the river, which all but those most confident of their horses might well hesitate to cross. Moreover, they saw that the chase had become useless.

William Penn and I stopped at last.

"Now, William Penn," I said, "you have gone far enough."

"If I were not so much afraid of bullets I think I would continue with you to the war," he said, looking at me inquiringly.

"William Penn," I replied, "nobody can find fault with your particular brand of cowardice, but you are too old to become a soldier, and, besides, you must go back and take care of Madam Arlington."

"And of Miss Elinor, if need be?" he said, still looking at me inquiringly.

"Yes," I replied, meeting his gaze firmly.

"Then perhaps I can be of more use at home than if I became a soldier?"

"Undoubtedly!"

Tears stood in the eyes of this faithful old friend as he shook my hand once, twice, thrice, and then turned to go. He rode away with bowed head. When he had gone a rod, he called back:

"O Henry!"

"Yes, William Penn."

"Remember that it's no part of a soldier's duty to get in the way of the bullets unless he has to."

"I shall remember."

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

Then he was gone, and I rode on alone.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE LITTLE CHURCH OF SHILOH

A REGIMENT was marching, and marching it held its tongue.

The soldiers had learned through time and trouble—two able teachers—that talk was a waste, and they forbore. They had even ceased to swear, except at the worst of luck, which indicated either discipline or resignation. The sound made by hundreds of feet, sunk deep in the mud, and then pulled out again like a stopper from a bottle, kept up a curious succession of muffled volleys, a kind of monotonous accompaniment to their marching. Mingled with it came the solemn clank of artillery, the rattle of rifles against each other, and now and then the forlorn neigh of a tired horse. But the soldiers maintained their obstinate silence, bending their heads a little to the rain which was pounding in their faces like the leaden hail of hostile armies, and trod silently on. Sodden vapours floated over the plain and weary bushes bent to the moaning wind. The sky was a dirty gray, and huge clouds of smoky brown moved solemnly from horizon to horizon.

A river of yellowish, muddy water flowed beside the toiling soldiers, its pace scarcely greater than theirs, and upon its current floated some squat, ugly gunboats, with cannon looking out of the portholes, and tired men on the decks. Occasionally the gunboats emitted

a weary whistle, as if they, too, wondered when the long march would come to an end, but the men whom they carried were as silent as those on the land. Talk was vanity and waste to both. Besides, there was nothing to be said.

The country was sombre and desolate like the skies, the two matching well. Bushes, logs, and weeds, swept away by the high waters, floated on the yellow current of the river. The land was sterile and stony, a bleak red soil that nourished only dwarfed forests and patches of sassafras bushes—land and products obviously ashamed of each other; apparently it was uninhabited, save for two or three distant log cabins that snuggled between the low hills.

I was the third soldier on the left in one of the front companies, and it seemed to me that the most impressive thing in the march of all those hundreds was the silence of the men. "Men" was really the wrong word, for they were nearly all boys, fair and large, with the brown faces of open-air life, farmer boys, sons of the forest and prairie.

It grew colder after awhile and hailed.

"A dreary sight," I said at last to Shaftoe, who was my comrade on the right. I had rejoined him at Louisville after my escape across the river, and we were still together, although it was now the second year of the war.

"I have seen worse, Henry," he replied cheerfully.

"When and where?" I asked, unbelievably.

"When I went out with Albert Sidney Johnston, the same that we're going to fight, to Salt Lake City, to punish the Mormons for having five wives apiece when one's too many," replied Shaftoe. "What's a bit of chilly weather like this to a storm on the great plains, when the cold freezes off all your toes and fingers, and the hail is as big as baby cannon balls? Then any night the buffalo herds, forty million strong, might

stampede our horses and run over our whole army, and if we escaped them the chances were nine out of ten that we'd starve to death long before we could get to Brigham Young's capital and see if it was really true that he had seven dozen wives. There's nothing so bad that it can't be a lot worse. Don't forget it."

"Then what would you call this?" I asked.

"A little exercise and change of the weather for the sake of the blood," said the veteran regular, in his usual cheerful tone.

"But when are we going to reap the glories of war?" I persisted.

"Don't make trouble for yourself; it's a bad plan," he replied, and smiled solemnly at me.

I relapsed perforce into silence, but I clung to my opinion that the glory was far ahead. I had been nearly a year in the service and I had done little save to make long marches or share in futile skirmishes. Moreover, the war was taking a bad course, and the prospect of a reunited nation seemed distant. I had suffered various emotions when we began the invasion of my own State, and those emotions were increased when we passed within twenty miles of Madam Arlington's house. I had not heard from my grandmother since the night of my flight, and I expected no news although so near, but as we went into camp a gray old man rode up and, after enduring patiently the jests from rude soldiers, was passed on to me for whom he had inquired. It was William Penn, and his joy at the meeting shone in his eyes. His was not less than mine.

"Your grandmother is well," he said, "and she sends you word to keep your head cool and your feet dry."

He brought most welcome news, and he replied, too, to my eager questionings, that Mrs. Maynard and Elinor were still at their home and had not been troubled by the soldiers of either side.



"Miss Elinor comes to see your grandmother often," said William Penn, "and they are as thick as two peas in a pod. Mrs. Maynard does not like it, but that does not make any difference with Madam Arlington. You know her."

I thought that in truth I knew my grandmother, and I was forced to smile. I asked if he had heard anything more of Varian. He replied that Varian had been at the Maynard house often until some months ago when he went South to join Johnston's army, with which he was now supposed to be.

When William Penn started home he slipped in my hands a flask.

"It's the best Kentucky make," he said, "and I wouldn't be putting temptation in the hands of the young, but it will be medicine to you on these long winter marches."

I thought over the good William Penn's visit, and now as I marched by Shaftoe's side I wished that he might come again with another message from those for whom I cared.

The wind and the hail had entered into a conspiracy against the bedraggled army. It was that curious weather of southern Kentucky and northern Tennessee, when winter and spring, trying to meet, fail, and the hiatus is filled in with any sort of a day you dislike, a succession of hot and cold extremes, in beautiful alternation.

The wind died soon and the skies were obscured by rolling brown clouds, forming a depressing canopy under which we trod in silence, while fog rose up from the damp earth.

"See! the sun will shine again," said Shaftoe presently, pointing to a dim redness showing through the vapours. "Watch it scatter these mists and clouds."

The light grew, throwing out both red and yellow beams, the fog began to shred away, the bayonets rose

out of it again like a hedge of steel, the faces of the men appeared, damp as if from a bath, patches of fog floated away like steam from the manes of the horses. I was filled with admiration at this sudden reappearance of the lost regiment, glittering now in the sun, whose radiant light gilded the brown faces of the men and their sombre garments. The clouds fled in defeated battalions from the skies, which arched overhead, a dome of satinlike blue, save where the sun, gorgeous in red and gold, filled a circle in the western curve, and long bars of crimson light shot away toward the horizon. Winter had suddenly fled, and spring, after the frequent custom of the middle South, came crowding on its footsteps, granting not a minute's delay. A warm wind blew from the west, and the desolate trees raised their boughs and showed green.

"To enjoy being dry it's well to have been wet," said Shaftoe.

A man of most singular appearance walked just ahead of us. He was tall, thin, with sharp face and wonderfully bright eyes, and he was not in uniform, his clothing being black, and his coat very long. He was the chaplain of our regiment. Before we left Louisville I was on sentinel duty when he undertook to walk into the lines. I stopped him and asked who he was.

"Friend," he replied sternly, "I am a humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus; and pray who are you?"

I said that I was the sentinel on watch, and then he gave me a card on which was written, "The Reverend Elkanah Armstrong, Revivalist." He became our chaplain shortly afterward, and a braver man I never saw. He was of the denomination known in the West as Hard-shell Baptist, and he shirked no toil or danger. Now he strode on before in silence, an example of self-reliance and devotion to duty.

We passed into deep forests of oak, and hickory,

and beech, and pine. It was a large regiment, with horses and wagons, and artillery, but the forest was so great that it swallowed us up, and took no note of our passage, just as it had swallowed up the Army of the Tennessee, to which this regiment belonged, and which it was endeavouring to overtake. The main force had come on the Tennessee by steamer, but our regiment was compelled to make the last stretch of the journey by land.

Even in the forest, as if to atone for its long eclipse, the brilliant sun penetrated the leafy shadows, throwing its yellow beams across the trees and the young grass, where the drops of water still twinkled like many-coloured beads. The wind from the far southwest brought with it the odour of summer flowers. The spirits of the boys, marching in ragged ranks, rose. One began to sing—

“We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more,”

and all the other boys took it up in a huge volume of sound which may not have been musical, although not without grandeur, as it rolled in waves through the illimitable forest.

“Some of the officers are trying to stop this; it’s a mistake,” said Shaftoe to me. “The spirit to sing means the spirit to fight.”

“But we may never overtake the Southern army,” I said.

“Then there’s consolation in that,” he replied, “for we won’t die a sudden and violent death, which, I take it, will be agreeable to our feelings.”

The splendour of the sun increased, its brilliant rays cutting a way through the budding foliage of the forest and finding every cranny. The arms of the soldiers glittered, and the west was a flood of red and yellow, great clouds of gold and scarlet piling upon each other

like terraces in the sky. The waves of warmth flowed northward, and the moist earth dried under their healing touch.

We overtook at nightfall the Army of the Tennessee, just camping in the forest which rolled away on every side, seemingly without end, and began to gather brushwood from the littered ground for the fires. I went with Shaftoe on one of these trips, and wandering far from the camp we came presently to a little wooden house standing in a clearing—a lone, bare building, square and plain, never costing more than a few dollars to build. The place was silent, nowhere did we see a sign of life; there were no outbuildings, just that lone little box, and yet it was not without a sort of silent majesty; the huge red disk of the sun was sinking behind the distant hills, and its rays fell full upon the window of the little house; the glass gave them back with interest, and seemed to blaze in red fire; every plank, and log, and shingle was luminous in this last light, and as the sun became dimmer the little house seemed to grow in size.

"Now, if I believed in ghosts I'd say that place was haunted," said Shaftoe. "I vote we don't go in."

"I don't want to go in any more than you do," I said, and shivered, feeling the chill of the coming night; "but across yonder is another clearing, and I see now a farmer getting ready to go home; let's talk with him."

The light of the setting sun made a focus of the farmer, showing all his angles and seams as he stood on a distant hillside, unhitching his horse from the plough. We hastened over the rough ground and overtook him just as he mounted to ride home. He was old, gnarled, knotty, and brown, a man who had passed through many cold winters and hot summers, enduring both as they came.

I knew that the farmer must be like others whom we met in those regions, devoted adherents of the South,

but I hailed him in friendly fashion. He merely nodded, paying no attention to our blue uniforms.

"What country is this?" I asked.

"Tennessee."

"I know that," I said, "but your answer is vague."

"The answer fitted the question."

"What is that?" asked Shaftoe, pointing to the lone building which was now half in shadow.

"That," replied the old man, his eyes following Shaftoe's pointing finger, "is the little church of Shiloh."

"A lonesome place," I said.

The farmer did not reply.

"You've been ploughing," I added, irritated a little at his taciturn manner.

"Yes."

"But your soil is sterile," I continued, pointing to the red hillside. "It ought to be fertilized."

"Perhaps it will be."

"With what?"

"With your bones."

Then the old man clucking to his horse, rode off through the woods.

"What did he mean by that?" I asked.

"I don't know," said Shaftoe; "but you can wager your chance of heaven against a glass of lemonade that he's a thick-and-thin rebel, and you'll never smell fire."

I watched the old man for a few moments as he rode away between the trees, which grew in long rows like columns, his figure forming a sombre blur against the background of the twilight. I had listened to many prophets and most were false, but this might be a true one. The little church of Shiloh was invisible now, save a single beam of light from the lost sun which struck upon the glass of the window and twinkled in the twilight like a bead of fire, and, then going out, left no ray of brightness in the darkening

woods, silent save for the moaning wind, though the Northern army of forty thousand men lay not far away.

We hastened back toward that army, oppressed somewhat by the lengthening shadows and the wailing of the wind in the lonely woods.

Presently a luminous haze showed through the darkness, and its pink light grew into red as we approached the camp, where hundreds of fires already were burning. The forest was illuminated; while dark on the outside it was warm at heart, and my spirits sprang up at the sight. Thousands of voices blending made a cheerful chatter, and figures passed and repassed, black lines before and behind the flames. Millions of sparks flew off among trees still too damp to catch fire, and the forty thousand men and boys, farmers nearly all, accustomed to self-help and a life in the open air, took comfort basking in the firelight and cooking their suppers, which they ate without criticism.

"What soldiers they will make with a little discipline and trial in the fire!" said Shaftoe, eyeing the muscular forms; and then under his breath, although I heard him, "if they are not killed first."

A faint shadow appeared on the veteran's face as he looked at this multitude of boys who endured so much and were happy over so little. "Good food for the cannon—too good!" I heard him add.

I took my place with Shaftoe beside one of the fires, but the old regular would not let me rest; first it was shoes and socks to be dried, and then the clothing that I wore next to my skin.

"Look to your feet; it's the first duty of a soldier," he said, thus confirming my grandmother's advice. "They are the beginning of a man, starting right at the ground, and the rest is built upon 'em. They are the foundation of him, and he must take care of 'em. What use has the Government for a soldier who can't march? It's bought all your fighting qualities, paying you so



much per month for 'em, and if you are an honest man you'll stick to the whole text of the bargain. So don't forget your feet."

He made all those about him follow his suggestions and did a hundred other things which seemed little, but which I know now were vital to the soldier on the march. Yet in all this work, received sometimes ungratefully, he was lively and gay, pretending that he was doing nothing, repressing the disorderly, encouraging the weak, and becoming the father, protector, and confessor of the company. I, looking on, admired, and at last asked how he did it.

"If a man can't learn anything in thirty years he's a born fool, with nature improved by art," replied Shaftoe.

He would say no more, and the captain of the company, who had seen just enough of the military life to feel sure that Shaftoe knew a hundred times as much as himself, smoked a pipe and was wisely silent. We had plenty of stores, and supper was abundant. The men ate and were happy. The fires ran in lines through the forest and formed a great core of light which shone over the brown faces, the rifles, and the cannon. Shaftoe loosened his belt and said life was good; I did not deny it, feeling a great content. Some one produced an old accordion and began to play the martial strains of Dixie.

"That's not our tune," I said. "It belongs to the South; besides, the Southerners played it at Bull Run when they beat us."

"It's all right," said Shaftoe. "We're in Dixie now and we can borrow their music—spoils of conquest. And it's lively."

Some of the men began to dance, and the officers did not stop them. Their figures swung back and forth before the background of the blazing fires like silhouettes on a screen, and the effect became ghostly



and unreal to me. Forty thousand shadows dancing by night in the wilderness! I laughed at my fantasy and concluded that it was too huge. Those were real figures of real men, my comrades, and good fellows.

The rattle of distant rifle shots came from two or three points, but we did not stir.

"That's a bad practice the men have got into," said the regular, "firing off their guns when they change guard. It's a waste of ammunition, a warning to the enemy if he ever comes within hearing, and it's contrary to every rule of discipline in every book of warfare that was ever printed. What would our colonel have said to such a thing in the little old regular army?"

I grew sleepy. The old accordion still played the martial tunes, the forest giving back discordant echoes, but its tones seemed softer, the fires danced about in queer fashion, and I lay down upon the ground for my night's rest. I was aroused by a jerk from Shaftoe.

"Get up!" cried the regular. "Don't you know enough yet not to go to sleep on the bare ground, 'specially when it's soaking with damp as it is to-night? One would think that you were a raw recruit."

I apologized with some shame for my lack of precaution, and securing an armful of boughs and brushwood stretched myself upon them, wrapped in my blanket. The forest moved off into space, the noises ceased, the fires faded and went out, and I slept.

I awoke once in the night, and I always remember that scene as if it were a dream. A light fog was rising, the earth having received so much rain that the dampness lingered. The fires smouldered, and the soldiers lay so thick that they seemed to my half-conscious senses to form a living carpet for the earth. Sleeping the heavy sleep of exhaustion, they were so silent that I was awed. Forty thousand men lying there in the forest

were like forty thousand dead. The horses, weary with work, were as still as their masters. Above them all floated the clouds of fog and darkness.

I was aroused after midnight by Shaftoe, who told me that it was my turn at the watch. He was to stand guard with me.

We walked westward through the forest, no one paying the slightest heed to us, and passed a large tent open at one side, with the light of two lanterns shining from it and disclosing its occupants. A half dozen men sitting in the tent were talking earnestly or bending over maps and papers.

"That's Grant on the left," said Shaftoe.

I looked curiously at the victor of Fort Donelson, the short, thickset man with the reddish beard, the strong face, and the heavy jaw. This general had begun to attract attention by his vigour and his capture of Donelson, and it was said that he was the single Northern leader of great promise in the West. I noticed that he was the only one in the tent who said nothing, apparently content with listening.

"A council of war," said Shaftoe. "They're trying to put their hand on that Southern army; they can't, and maybe if they could they'd be sorry they did, like the man who caught the fox."

We moved on in the darkness, which closed in behind us, enveloping the tent and its occupants and hiding them from our gaze.

As we took our places we heard the reports of many shots, and again Shaftoe scored the foolish habit in which the men were indulging as they changed the guard, and the laxity of the officers in permitting it.

"More good powder burnt," he said, "and a lot of noise for nothing. War isn't a mere popping of fire-crackers."

After that the night was not disturbed, and, the long hours passing in silence, I saw at last the sun

rising out of the east, the welcome signal that our watch was over. Resigning my place to my relief, I returned with Shaftoe to the camp and breakfast. As we approached we heard a tumult and the sound of oaths.

"Only some of those Kentuckians drunk again," said a regular, an acquaintance of Shaftoe's.

They were bringing the drunkards in, a sodden lot, some young, and all very drunk. They had got at the sutler's stores and had gone through the liquor like a fire in a broom sedgefield. A middle-aged man with a scar on his face was sustained by two of his comrades and his faith in his own greatness, though his feet wobbled like those of a baby. A boy walking near him lurched wildly, but did not fall. Two or three others were trying to sing, committing hideous outrages upon familiar old tunes. I was disgusted and I felt shame, too, because they were from my own State.

"It's a pity," said Shaftoe, "especially as some of 'em would make good soldiers—if they'd keep sober. The man with the scar on his face, Jake Sibley, went through the Mexican war—that's where he got the scar—and he's as brave as a hornet."

"Perhaps," I replied; "but he's only drunk now."

Sibley had begun to shout in a kind of lax enthusiasm, and one of the guard prodded him in the side with a gun muzzle to keep him quiet. A tall, thin man with the face and gravity of a clergyman, but as drunk as any of the rest, began to remonstrate, but made his protests with curses, which he poured out in such a stream and with so much solemnity that I was amazed.

"His name's Parker, William Parker—the 'Reverend Bill' they call him sometimes," said Shaftoe. "He was educated for the ministry, but I don't think his education was finished; at least there was a misfit somewhere, as you can see."

The noisy crowd was driven on by the guard to work out its offences in camp labour, and I sought my bed

of boughs again as the army about us came to life and prepared to take breakfast. The note of many thousand voices rose cheerfully. The men of the West, sinewy and enduring, were forgetting already their labours and privations. Used to the open air and the woods, they found no difficulty in making this forest, new to them, their home. I thought of Shaftoe's words, and I began to see what soldiers these long-limbed, hardy sons of the fields and plains would make when they acquired the proper experience and discipline, and, so thinking, I went to sleep again.

## CHAPTER XII

### WITH THE VANGUARD

SOME days passed and the Army of the Tennessee, forty thousand recruits, waiting for the Army of the Ohio, forty thousand of the same kind, to come up, took root where it lay, with its sides resting on Owl and Lick Creeks, and its back to the Tennessee River. I heard it said among the soldiers who exercised their privilege of free speech that we would resume our southward march as soon as Buell arrived with the Army of the Ohio; and all were impatient to see him, since we were afraid that the Southern forces, reported to be gathering in great strength at Corinth, in Mississippi, would retreat farther into the heart of the Confederacy.

Our young force lying in the Southern woods, with the spring growing about it, and the memory of its victory at Donelson, which was called brilliant, yet fresh, began to feel the high blood in its veins and rejoice at its vigour. The few men and women who lived there were loyal to the South, and if they knew anything to tell of the Southern army at Corinth nothing could have drawn from them the telling of it. That army we began to believe had become a fantasy, a dream; it was worse—a joke. Sibley served his term for drunkenness and proved himself a braggart as well as a soak.

“We took all the rebels at Donelson,” he said; “the rest are ghosts.”

His pronouncement was received with applause, and feeling approval he swaggered more than ever. The eighteen-year-old boy, Masters, already a hardened drunkard, imitated him with success, and considered himself on the road to greatness. But I saw the generals sometimes, and I was a witness to the anxiety on their faces when they looked upon the raw army and wondered if they would ever get a chance at their evasive foe.

The spring still unfolded, and the steamers puffed up and down the river, the lazy coils of smoke trailing across the blue sky. One evening some cavalry, scouting, exchanged shots with Confederates, but it was only a partisan band, they said, and the camp, ashamed to have aroused itself over such a trifle, settled back to its waiting. Buell, with the second army, was close at hand, and then, being in great force, we would start South again. The next night was that of Saturday, April 5, 1862, beautiful, warm, and clear, fit to precede the day of rest, Sunday, and near midnight Shaf-toe and I took our places on the picket line. Our beats adjoined, and as we trod back and forth, and met, we exchanged a word now and then, but oftener were silent.

The forest was luminous behind me with the lights from a thousand fires, and when I looked back I saw the tracery of the trees appearing black and sharp, an infinite network against the glow of crimson and pink; but in front my eyes met only the wall of the forest, dark and silent, rising like an impregnable barrier between the army and the South. The nearest trees waved ghostly boughs in the moonlight, but farther on they melted together and no light passed between. A curious wailing noise, the sighing of the night breeze among the foliage, came out of that forest, and, though I knew its nature, I was moved by its lonely note. The sound was distinct in my ear, despite the tumult



of the camp behind me, which had not yet died even at so late an hour. It was like a faint sob, and it rose and sank but never ceased. A small creek flowed near and some rays of moonlight fell on its surface, disclosing the silver bubbles, but the creek, too, quickly sank into the black wall of the forest and vanished. There was a rustle in a thicket and I took my rifle from my shoulder, but it was only a rabbit which leaped over a hillock and was gone, running northward. I put my weapon back on my shoulder and resumed my lonely beat. Lonelier I was to-night than I had been in many days, for my mind was running back over the past year and to those who were dear to me, though I kept my eyes on the forest because it was my duty to look that way, and because there was a spell in the solemn blank presented there; it was not a barrier only, but a mystery too, and the moan of the wind through the boughs was its voice, which I could not interpret.

There was a rustle; it was only another rabbit that leaped out of a thicket and scurried away; two more followed presently. I remembered a little later that all of them like the first ran northward.

The rumble of the camp behind me continued, and it was not one voice, but many, most of which were known to me. I heard the heavy clank of a cannon moved into a new position, the rattle of rifles against each other, the clatter of pots and kettles thrown into a corner for the morning's use. The next day was Sunday, and the chaplains would hold services in the camp, for our Westerners were a religious people, liking the faith and the externals, and not much addicted to introspection.

The luminous haze over the camp which gave it such a picturesque effect sank a little, the dimness of the night was creeping down and inclosing the army. Far above shoals of stars twinkled in a sky of cloudless blue.



I walked back toward the eastern end of my beat and saw Shaftoe approaching. The regular at that moment was in an open space and the moon's rays clothed him in a garment of misty silver, wrapping it about his figure like a veil, enlarging and idealizing him. I noticed that he was still elastic, upright, his dress trim, the man like his equipment in perfect order, and ready with a great reserve of strength for any call no matter how unexpected. It seemed to me that he bore upon him the seal of the United States Government, the American regular soldier, made especially for his work; the guarantee that the goods were perfect was current in any market.

Shots were heard to the right.

"Those fool volunteers firing off their guns again at the change of guard," said Shaftoe.

We stood a moment when we met, listening, but the shots ceased. Then we looked toward the forest which had the same peculiar attraction for both.

"Do you know that we two are alone with the universe?" asked Shaftoe.

"What do you mean?"

"There are forty thousand men behind us, but we do not see one of them. So far as we are concerned we are the only two human beings on this globe. A man feels it on a night like this in the forest, but he feels it most of all in the dark, and in the immensity of the great plains, where a bullet might travel a thousand miles east, west, north, or south, and hit nothing. It's out there, in all the huge loneliness, that the regulars have been doing their great work clearing the way for new States. Some day the world may hear of it."

He did not say these things in any tone of complaint, but merely as a fact, and shouldering his rifle again walked back on his beat. I followed him with my eyes. This man had served his Government for thirty years,

unknown, unrewarded, and unthanked; he stood now where he was when he began, plus nothing except thirty years, and yet he had no complaint to make, no fault to find with anybody, but did his duty as cheerfully and well in the thirtieth year as in the first. I leaned upon Shaftoe although I did not know it then.

The fires of the camp sank lower, the misty dusk hovering between the clear blue sky and the earth thickened, the clang of weapons and the talk of the men ceased. Most of the camp was sleeping. The wind increased a little, and its moan among the trees grew louder. The flames died, and only the glowing coals remained. All but the generals and sentinels slept. The camp was still, save a murmur like a heavy wind, made by the regular breathing of forty thousand men in slumber. As I walked my beat I heard nothing but this, the real wind in the forest, and the tread of my own footsteps. I was always glad when I went back toward the right, and met the regular returning on his beat.

"Do you see the forest in front of us twisting itself into fantastic shapes?" I asked.

"What do you mean?" replied Shaftoe, staring.

"Those boughs across yonder are curved into the outlines of a giant's face; those two spots where the moon is peeping through form the eyes, and yonder is a church, and yonder is something else which I can't exactly make out."

Shaftoe laughed.

"You can make out enough," he said. "Too much imagination, Henry; besides, you are thinking too hard. Don't do it. Just watch and walk, or you'll be thinking and imagining yourself into a fever."

I quieted my fancy and the hours passed slowly on. Behind me was only a gleam from the fires and it lay close to the earth; now and then little white clouds sailed peacefully between the stars and me. In front

the forests remained sombre and black, and the nearest trees holding out their boughs, like weapons, threatened. The idea that Shaftoe and I were alone with the universe still gripped me. Another rabbit leaped out of the woods and scurried by, almost brushing my foot.

"Either that was a very bold or a very scared rabbit!" I said to myself.

Like its predecessors it fled northward.

Presently there was a rustling heavier than that of a rabbit in the thicket before me. I cocked my rifle. A deer came out of the brush and, stopping abruptly, looked at me with great, frightened eyes. It panted and its flanks were hot with steam; evidently it had been running far and fast, and the terror of pursuit was upon it.

"Poor devil!" I thought. "What hunter has been chasing you at this hour of the night?" Then I said meditatively: "Why should we shoot deer now when there's bigger game afoot?"

I could easily have put a bullet between the eyes of the scared animal, but I had no desire to do so; my feeling was sympathetic, instead.

"Come, Mr. Deer," I said; "don't be afraid of me. I'm not going to hurt you."

The deer gazed at me a moment or two longer with frightened eyes, and then skimming by was gone like a ghost.

It fled northward in the path of the rabbits.

I noticed the fact and wondered.

"How long until day?" I asked the regular when next we met.

"The four longest hours of the night," replied Shaftoe. "Take it easy; you'll have a whole Sunday to sleep and rest in."

I decided to practise the veteran's philosophy, and walked more slowly, while my thoughts wandered vaguely into worlds unknown. A gleam appeared in

the forest, it was only a firefly and was gone; a second gleam, it was but the rotten wood which sometimes glows like a coal in the southern wilderness. Time passed and I saw far in the forest another light which flashed a little longer than the rest. I called to Shaftoe, who watched it until it faded.

"A firefly, a glowworm, or something of that kind," said the veteran, and walked on unconcerned.

But my mind remained unquiet. My imagination, which I had kept in subjection for a little while, rose up, more powerful than ever; I saw lights where lights were not, and I feared that I did not see them where they were. Once I was sure that I heard a sound like the clank of a cannon wheel, and the tread of many men marching, but I laughed at myself for such fancies, believing that I was under the spell of the forest and the wilderness, which takes a man by the throat and turns him into a fanciful child. I had just heard Shaftoe say so; and the regular, out of his vast experience, ought to know.

The wind was now in my face, still moaning, but was as warm as June to the touch, and heavy with the promise of sunshine and rich summer. I had always loved the fields and the forest, and I liked now to think of myself wading knee-deep through the green grass, while on the horizon line the peach trees and the apple trees in new bloom shone in cones of pink and white.

"It's the vanguard of summer and it's getting into my blood," I said to Shaftoe, when the veteran came once more.

"Strikes me that way too," replied the regular; "makes me feel as if I were only fifteen again. But one can not trust this Southern spring; it's full of treachery. Anyway, I'm going to take a long sleep when I go off duty, and day is pretty near now, for which I'm thankful."

He straightened himself up and walked springily along, thinking, I was sure, of the rest and sleep that were soon to be his. I was not so fresh, and my steps dragged a little as I turned for the four hundredth time and walked away. I looked toward the east, and, seeing a tinge of gray over the crest of a distant hill, rejoiced at the sign that my night's work was about to end. The gray turned to silver and the edge of the silver to pink, but my eyes wandered back to the forest, which I watched because it was in front of me. The camp behind me was still quiet; the regular breathing of many men coming like the murmur of a river.

The dusk shredded away a little and the trunks of the trees rising out of the mist stood in rows like columns, but the thickets, which grew where the trees were not, were still black and impenetrable.

I heard a noise which I would have sworn in the day was the clank of metal, but in the misty dawn I disbelieved my ears. I stopped, and when I walked on the noise was repeated. I tried to pierce the thickets with my eyes, and they were met by the flash of steel. I laughed aloud. My eyes were growing as untrue as my ears, and while one heard the unreal the other saw the same. They were entering into a conspiracy against me, for a sound as of a command given came from the forest, and then once more that tread of many feet. And there, too, was that flash of steel again! If a conspiracy between eye and ear, it was well maintained!

I stopped, and grew cold from head to foot. Neither sights nor sounds ceased; the unreal might be the real, and fact may have come disguised as fancy! I was about to call to Shaftoe, whose figure was approaching in the filmy gray of the dawn, but suddenly a wild, terrible shout from countless throats arose.

I knew it, the long-drawn, high-pitched cry, copied

perhaps from the Indian war whoop, the fierce "rebel yell." It swelled in tremendous volume, filling my ears and all the air, and echoing far across the river and hills.

The next instant an army of forty thousand men rose up from the forests and thickets and threw itself upon me.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE UNBIDDEN GUEST

It seemed to my dazzled eyes that I was to be overwhelmed in the next breath, that I alone was the aim of the entire Southern army, hurled at me thus like a single huge cannon ball. I stood for a moment without motion. The "rebel yell," poured from so many throats, was still ringing in my ears and filling all the forest with its menace. As far as I could see reached the flash of steel, and a moving line of rifle muzzles and bayonet points as thick as a hedge confronted me. Behind these appeared the faces of the men in row on row, seeming to rise above each other like a terrace, as the attacking army rushed on. The crackle of rifles swelled to the left and right, and the dawn sputtered with flame. The battle had begun.

I fired my own weapon at the wall of faces that was rushing down upon me, and sprang back, shouting the alarm. I looked for Shaftoe with that instinctive feeling of reliance which caused me to turn to him in such emergencies, and the regular was there.

"Back upon the camp, Henry!" he shouted. "They've caught our army over the coffee cups, and we must give to the first rush."

It was obvious, even to the untried, that nothing else could be done if we would save ourselves from being swept out of existence, and backward we sped like corks before a wave. I was still in a sort of daze. This



apparition of a great and hostile army rising up, as if from the earth itself, struck me with such surprise that I could not recover at once, especially with imminent danger pressing so hard upon me, and the thunder of so many feet in my ears. It was a time to try the boldest.

A terrible tumult rose in the camp of our army, to which the dawn of a Sunday had brought such a sudden and unbidden guest; the officers shouted commands, the men rushed to arms, and some began to fire scattering shots into the advancing waves of the assailing force. It was a turmoil, a medley of fire, and steel, and shouting men, and unheard orders, and rattling rifles, and always sweeping down upon us the Southerners; a wave crested with bayonets. We stopped for a moment in a little clump of bushes, while past us, driven on from behind, surged the remnants of five companies, sent out to reconnoitre at daybreak, and first to feel the shock of the Southern charge. They had been driven backward at once, and when they would give warning of the danger, that danger came with them.

The Southern line began to fire, rank after rank, the rattle of the rifles rose to a fierce and unbroken crash, and a leaden sleet beat upon the confused camp, decimating the men who were trying to form for battle, strewing the ground with dead and wounded, sweeping down the tents, and adding to the confusion which attends a surprise—and most of all, a surprise at daybreak, when the men are just rising from sleep and the senses are dull. The yell of the Southerners swelled and fell once and again, but over it now rose the crash of the rifle fire and the wheet-wheet! of the bullets. Nothing was more vivid in my ear than the noise made by the passage of these bullets, which rushed by in such a stream that the air seemed to be filled with them. Then a deeper thunder joined, as the field artillery—the

twelve-pound Napoleons—began to fire, and the sweep of their balls formed the bass chorus for the shriller note of the bullets.

“Oh, for earthworks, intrenchments, and we’d hold ’em off yet!” groaned the regular.

“I don’t mind a battle, but I don’t like being rushed into it before it’s due,” I gasped.

Shaftoe laughed.

“That reminds me that it’s no time for either of us to complain,” he said.

Clouds of smoke rolling up in languid waves rose over the forest, and gathered in a thick veil between the earth and the skies beyond it, which were now suffused with the morning sun. But beneath it there was an ominous brightness; a brightness, too, made ruddy by the incessant blaze of the rifles and heavy guns. The stricken army struggled and writhed in its pain, and bleeding already from many wounds, sought to gather itself together and hit back at its enemy. It seemed to us that the whole world was pouring upon us in one avalanche seeking to blot us from the face of the earth. We beheld our dead scattered through all the woods before us. The sight afflicted us; many of our men cursed their officers for allowing us to be surprised. Some, untried, raw, were overcome by panic, and joined the stream of wounded that poured back toward the shelter of the river bank, telling strange tales of what they had seen and suffered. But the vast majority, even in those moments of terror when Nature said “run,” remembered their duty and strove to do it in the face of death and defeat. Companies formed, and as soon as they formed were swept down by the flood of the Southern army and the battle knew them no more. Officers dragged their men into line until they themselves were slain by rifle and cannon balls; but whatever officers and men did, however bravely they fought, the great wave of fire and smoke bearing down upon us and pour-

ing out death rolled on. It burst upon the camp, overthrowing men and tents, sweeping everything before it in a wild rout, a line of lead and steel that nothing could withstand. Some of the fallen tents caught fire, and the boughs of the trees, despite their spring freshness and the dampness of previous rains, sparkled into flames, lighting up the dawn with a new and redder light. Horses broke loose from their pickets and galloped up and down in terror, some wounded, all neighing a wild, shrill neigh that had more of pain in it than the cry of man. The thunder of the battle deepened, and with it the confusion.

After the first shock of surprise, the resistance in our army began to grow. The earliest groups of men that formed were scattered, and the Southern troops passed over the places where they had stood; but the later bodies showed more cohesion, and, though swept back, did not break; they began to unite with each other by and by, and to form companies and regiments and long battle lines, and to oppose with an angry front the powerful army that had been launched at us like a catapult. They seized every hillock as a post, and defended the crossing of every gully, clinging to a second position when they lost the first.

The Southern army rushed, a victor, through our camp, and, knowing already what it was to go unfed, was amazed at the plenty it saw there. Soldiers who were half starved, and thinking the victory sure, suddenly remembered their stomachs, and began to eat the breakfast cooked by the Northern army, served now to the unbidden guest, our foe. Boys, like our own, they began to rejoice hugely in their triumph and their captured food. Meanwhile the battle rolled on toward the Tennessee. The main part of both armies was still fighting, and the loss of the stragglers did not diminish the torrents of metal which swept the field.

I began to recover my clearness of mind, and

grasped the facts that I saw, meanwhile keeping close to Shaftoe, who, though a private, loomed suddenly in my opinion one of the most important men in the field, certainly one of the wisest, and a figure to whom it would be well to cling.

"What shall we do?" I asked, shouting to make my voice heard above the roar. We had lost our own regiment.

"We'll join Sherman, who is standing firm across yonder, and after that we'll do whatever the rebels will let us do," replied Shaftoe, in the same tone.

Sherman and his command, who still held the ground upon which they stood, were some distance behind the little church of Shiloh, and we ran toward his solid body of troops, wishing to join that portion of the army which was the firmest. But we were compelled to make our way through the line of fire, and my wonder that I had not been hit was great, since the shower of bullets seemed to me to increase in thickness, and their whistling rose to a sound that resembled the scream of a hurricane. The air was full of falling twigs and boughs clipped from the trees by this hail of lead and steel, and once a tree, cut through at the trunk by cannon balls, fell with a great crash across our path. But we leaped over and ran on, coming to the crossing of a gully which was defended by a squad of men in blue. An officer was swearing at them with energy and profusion; a cannon ball stopped his oaths and his life at the same moment. The men hesitated, but when the tallest among them said something which I failed to hear, they settled back in their places and turned their faces to the enemy.

"Don't you know those men?" shouted Shaftoe to me. "That's the drunken squad, the lot of Kentuckians whom you saw put into the guardhouse the other morning for diminishing the visible supply of whisky. The tall one who was talking is Sibley, and

I should be surprised if they were not at least half drunk now. It's a pity, too; there's some first-class raw material there. The cloth is good, but it was spoiled in the making. Down for your life! There comes a volley."

He pulled me to my knees behind some rocks just in time. I heard the bullets over our heads, and we lay there awhile not daring to face the shower. We were at the edge of a gully, and only a few feet below us stood the drunken squad. We could hear every word that was said.

## CHAPTER XIV

†

### THE DRUNKEN SQUAD'S LAST STAND

THE disgraced Kentuckians, about twenty in number, were at the head of the gully. Sibley had taken only three drinks that morning, the attack coming too early for his arrangements, and his head was comparatively clear. He saw a dense mass of the enemy pressing up the ravine, which was wider at the far end, and it must have reminded him of Buena Vista, where the foe was five to one and the Americans yet won.

I knew those men, and I knew that a battle song was singing in the ears of Sibley—the chant of generations. His forefathers had fought the Indians and the English, almost without ceasing, and he, having fought for his country in war and himself in peace, had no mind to shun the fighting now, when it was pressed upon him, and would not be denied. He cocked his rifle and fired into the gray of the advancing Southern regiment. Then some one pulled at his arm. It was the boy Masters, who in the heat of a permanent admiration imitated his virtues and his vices, particularly the latter.

“They’ll walk over us,” said the boy, pointing to the gray mass in front. “Our captain’s killed, and what shall we do?”

“Yes, Billy, he’s killed; but he told us to hold this gully, and we needn’t disobey him because he’s dead.”

The boy made no reply, but pushing himself up by

Sibley's side fired at the Southern force. The rest of the twenty imitated his example. They were not a pretty lot; there was Congdon, a tall, raw-boned, loose-jointed mountaineer, who spoke in dialect and stole his comrades' rations; and Purvis, of Maysville, whose chief virtue was silence; and Walker, famed for laziness; and Williams, of Louisville, who was not much older than Masters; and Clymer, of Paducah, who was the oldest of them all, and others of the same type, gaunt, brown, and long, all united by the two great common bonds—love of whisky and hatred of work.

"Come boys," said Sibley, "you can all shoot; now show it!"

Twenty rifles poured a deadly volley into the advancing mass, which staggered and fell back, leaving a cluster of fallen, but recovering itself came on again. The twenty meanwhile reloaded rapidly and continued their own little battle, content with it and oblivious of the wider one that raged around them.

Never before had the twenty shown so much skill with the rifle, never before had they handled their long-barrelled weapons with such speed, and never before had they sent their bullets straighter to the mark. Jets of flame leaped from each muzzle, and the stream of lead sent into the advancing masses kept up an unbroken song. Their faces grew red with the fever of combat, and they drew quick breaths. The barrels of their rifles, fired so often, burned at the touch.

The general conflict deepened in intensity and tumult as the Northern army came more and more into action. Sherman's division held fast to the ground around the little church of Shiloh, sinking its feet there, and refusing to yield to the torrent of bullets and cannon balls that beat upon it and broke gaps in its ranks, closed up immediately after by the living. The thick smoke gathered against the tops of the trees, through which the sun came only in pale rays, and



under which men fought with furious energy in the half light. The thunder of the cannonade was unceasing, though it rose and fell in volume; but the minor note, the shrill and more spiteful crash of the small arms, was as steady as the sweep of a prairie wind. Save in front of Sherman it was a series of combats, waged by regiment against regiment, company against company, and man against man, a long, uncertain line of battle, winding, intermingling, and without plan. They met and fought in the dark and smoky woods, over hills, down gullies, tangled in thickets and among the trees, and the impartial cannon balls swept down bushes, trees, and men alike.

Meanwhile Shaftoe and I clung to the shelter of our rocks. I started to rise once, but he pulled me down.

"Don't be a fool!" he said. "You would be killed before you could draw three breaths. Save yourself. It's the right thing to do. You will be needed."

I obeyed.

Sibley, who felt only the heat of battle, marked the regiment that was advancing upon his comrades and himself.

"Down upon your faces!" he cried; "they are about to fire!"

All the twenty threw themselves flat, and at the same moment the front line of the enemy burst into flame. The crackle of the rifles was lost in the thunder of the battle that rolled incessantly around them, but Sibley and his comrades heard the whiz of the bullets as they flew like a swarm of disappointed bees over their heads.

"Now, up, boys!" he cried, "and let 'em have it!"

The battle fever was surging in his veins and heating his brain, and always the boy Masters, with a face as red as Sibley's own, was fighting at his elbow. I watched them both.

The men sprang to their feet, all except one, who lay crouched, with his eyes to the enemy.

"What's the matter with that drunken fool Johnson? Why don't he get up?" asked Sibley.

"He can't; he's got a bullet through his skull," replied Congdon, the mountaineer, with commendable calmness.

"It's just as well; his face is to the enemy," said Sibley. Then he gave again the order to fire. All their rifles crashed at once. Marksmanship was one among the small set of virtues owned by these men; the front line of the attacking force reeled back before such a well-aimed volley, and the dark objects lying in the weeds before it showed that the bullets had sped true.

"Hurrah!" shouted Sibley; "that took the sand out of their gizzards!"

A volley from the second Southern rank flew over the head of the first and into the twenty. Five men fell. Two rose again; one of the two was bleeding from a bad wound in the shoulder and turned pale.

"Captain," he said to Sibley, applying to him the term which was familiar in our State, and not always a mark of rank, "I got it hot and hard in the shoulder and it's time for me to hunt a hospital."

"Hospital the devil!" said Sibley. "Don't you see the enemy coming?"

The man said nothing more, but began to reload his rifle. The boy Masters fired, and shrieked with joy.

"I got one! I got one!" he cried. His face writhed with delight.

Sibley patted him approvingly on the shoulder. The fighting blood in the boy evidently found a response in the kindred blood of the older man.

"You're going to make a soldier, Billy," he said.

Then Masters forgot there was such a thing as danger.

"Maybe they'll turn back," said Clymer.

Sibley frowned at him. The speech was untimely and inappropriate.

"Turn back? not from the gates of hell! They're our own blood, and the hinges of their backbones are not oiled! We mustn't forget one thing or we'll never win this war, and it's that the Johnny Rebs are as good as we are. I came mighty near being a Johnny Reb myself. There's my brother Abner, he's one. Abner and I could never get along together. When the war came on I said to Abner, 'Which army are you going to join?' 'The Southern, of course,' he said. 'All right,' says I; 'then I'm going to join the Northern army,' and join it I did the very next day. Nothing but brother Abner's stubbornness kept the South from getting a mighty good soldier. Don't you fool yourself, the Rebs will keep coming."

"Then it's time to take a drink," said Clymer.

He produced a flask from his pocket, three or four others doing the same, and all drank from them, deeply, unctuously, and as a tribute of respect to the valour of the advancing foe. The blood flew to their brains and their courage flamed up. They saw many enemies, but their veins blazed with Homeric fire. They were only a lot of loafers, worthless in peace, but courage was their pocket piece, and they were ready to face armies.

"How the battle grows! Just listen to the shells and the song they sing!" cried Sibley.

The combat curved on either side of them in a red whirlwind.

Their immediate enemy halted a little as if choosing between ways, and the men took breath. More artillery rapidly came into action on either side, and now the dominant note of the battle—the sibilant song of all great battles—the screaming of the shells and shrapnel was heard rising above everything, over the thunder of the cannon as they were discharged, over the rattle of the rifles, the shouts of the men, the cries of the

wounded, the neighing of the horses, the clank of moving wheels, and the tread of the charging brigades, drowning everything else, singing their terrible song, filling the ears of the soldiers, and whistling through the forest with all the rage and force of a storm.

The boy Masters was affected and quivered. His face became pale. The flame of the cannon fell upon it and showed its leaden hue.

"It's all right, Billy," said Sibley, protectingly. "It's not a pretty song; it doesn't tell of cool water and green grass, but I've known worse."

"They're getting ready to give us another volley," said Purvis. "I think we'd better drop."

A piece of shrapnel, whistling with heat and speed, struck him between the eyes and he fell without a word. I was glad on Billy's account that he fell face downward.

"He'd have been a good soldier; he's earned his six feet of earth," said Sibley, as they rose after the volley. But the twenty had been reduced to fifteen. Williams, the Louisville man, was pouring out a stream of rich and unctuous oaths. A bullet had nipped him on the shoulder and the wound stung.

"Come, come, Williams!" said Sibley; "you're in luck! A hundred thousand rebels after you and able to give you only a flea-bite. If you curse so much for a little thing like that, what would you say if you had a leg or two shot off?"

A shell screaming in its flight passed over their heads, and all bowed to it.

"We'll give the right of way every time to as much iron as that," joyously exclaimed Sibley, in whose head the blood and fever of battle was rising higher and still higher. "What are you doing there, Congdon?"

"Sharpshooting."

The long, slim mountaineer was lying upon the ground, his slender, flexible form seeming to accommo-

date itself to every rock and bump, and to coil around it like a serpent. His eyes were glittering with ferocious joy as he looked down the sights of his rifle and picked his target. He was like an Indian triumphantly stalking his victim.

"By the Lord, it's bushwhacking!" cried Sibley. "You mountaineers can't help it; you were born to it. What else could you expect from a man from Breathitt County, Kentucky?"

Sibley and his little force occupied a good position, and with true military spirit they made the most of it, inflicting a heavy loss upon the advancing enemy and deranging his plans. Wherefore, they, the gully's defenders, became important. It was a detached little battle waged with an energy and fire of great pressure to the square inch, and the Southerners paused merely to consider the best plan of attack. This obstacle annoyed them, and they would sweep it out of the way. The Kentuckians saw them stop, and the little band's shout of triumph was heard for a moment amid the sound of the shells—a human note that defied rivalry. Sibley had all sorts of courage, natural, Dutch, and otherwise, fused this morning into a sparkling tonic, and he sprang upon the highest rock.

"Come on!" he shouted to the enemy. "We are here giving a dinner, and there are plates for you. Why don't you come?"

Williams grasped him by the legs and pulled him down at the crest of an oratorical flight, a dozen bullets whistling the next instant where his head had been, and lamenting in intelligible tones its disappearance. They did not know its hardness.

"You'll get yourself killed!" shouted Williams.

"What of it?" replied Sibley. "There's supposed to be a slight risk in war."

Then the survivors renewed the combat with fresh energy and passion. They sheltered themselves as

much as the gully would permit, creeping forward in their zeal to meet the enemy, and always they sent their bullets into his close ranks.

While they fought the battle spread, detached battalions joining and forming into a great whole that blazed and thundered and swayed back and forth. The line of fire on either side of the Kentuckians came nearer. Shells and shrapnel, not aimed at them nor fired by their immediate foe, flew over their heads. The columns of smoke rolled up like the waves of a flood, and thickened and darkened. The blaze of the firing streamed through it in countless flashes. The trees burned; millions of sparks flashed in the air.

"It's growing warm," said the boy.

"Yes, Billy; and don't forget that it can grow warmer," replied Sibley.

"They're coming again," said the boy.

"Yes, Billy, but we'll give 'em the same old welcome," replied Sibley.

Congdon, still hugging the ground in that frightful similitude of a snake, fired into the Southern ranks, and cursed between his teeth because the smoke would not let him see whether a man had fallen to his bullet. Williams looked at the dense mass of the enemy and felt that the odds were too great.

"Hadn't we better retreat?" he asked Sibley.

"Retreat! No! Maybe the fate of the whole army will depend upon our holding this place."

"Then I will not give an inch," said Williams. And he did not; for a second later a bullet passed through his heart and he held the ground upon which he had stood. Two more men fell before the bullets, and a bursting shell killed another. All around them the battle whirled and thundered.

The boy shivered again.

"Take a drink of this, Billy, and we'll win immortal honour and glory," said Sibley, patting him on the



shoulder with one hand and offering the flask with the other.

The boy drank, and a bullet saved him the trouble of returning the flask by dashing it to pieces in his hand.

"There was nothing left in it; no matter," said Sibley. "Steady now, boys, and we'll beat the Spartans at the old Greek what-do-you-call-it place."

A shell passed so near that the rush of air knocked him to his knees; he was up again in a moment, sanguine and defiant, and cheered on his men as the attack upon them grew fiercer. Congdon was killed as he hugged his rock, and he continued to hug it in death. A shell exploded among them and slew four men. They were only seven now, and three of the seven were wounded. But Sibley did not notice it. He looked straight ahead.

"Give it to 'em, my bullics!" he cried. "We've scared 'em already! Don't you see they are getting ready to run?"

The flash of the rifles aimed at them was very near, and coming nearer. The bullets sang to right and left, and the shrapnel flew overhead. A shell struck the earth close to them and covered Sibley with dirt. He cursed the shell from a full and vivid vocabulary.

"Clymer is killed," said the boy.

"Is he? That's not news on a day like this," replied Sibley.

"We're only six," said the boy, and then he added: "We're only five now, for there goes Morton. The shrapnel did it."

"Hold the gully!" shouted Sibley. "If there's nobody else, you and I will do it, Billy."

But the others did not flinch. The fire of battle was coursing through their veins, and they saw red. The chorus of the bullets and the shell had become a



familiar tune. Their rifles replied with undiminished ardour.

A piece of shrapnel struck the boy in the shoulder and he began to tremble.

"Never mind, Billy," said Sibley. "It's only a scratch."

Billy went on with his firing. There was a duty to be done and no time for trifles. But his eye and his hand grew unsteady. His wound was worse than he or Sibley would admit. The enemy, the hills, and the flashing of the guns before him made only a red blur, and an absent look came over his face as if his mind wandered back to the sheen and long, gentle roll of the blue grass, with the dusty gold of the sun floating over it like a tawny veil.

"Fire at 'em now!" shouted Sibley, and the five sent their bullets to the mark. An answering volley came, and two of the Kentuckians fell.

"The company is now small, but very select—eh, Thornton?" said Sibley to the third man. Sibley was wounded in the neck and his eye was wild.

"It's time to go," said the boy, whose mind was wandering further amid green fields and through lustrous sunshine.

"No, Billy, not yet; but I think the time for us all to go is almost at hand."

The battle converged about them, hovering closer and closer, giving forth continuously its ominous cry. The screaming of the shells, flying in showers, rose to a pitch unequalled before. It was a fierce, triumphant note, like a storm shrieking through a ship's rigging. But the boy did not hear it. He heard only the trickle of cool water among green fields that he had known, and the hum of the honeybees. I watched his face, and I knew.

"How that artillery flashes! Its blaze blinds me," said Sibley. The bullets flew in gusts around him.

"It's time to go," said the boy. "The corn is ripe in the fields."

"Yes, Billy; but the battle's only begun."

"Thornton's killed."

"Then, Billy, only you and I are left. Close up, and we'll win the biggest victory the world has ever known."

Sibley's dingy blue uniform was stained dark red in many places. His eyes saw through a mist. A thousand little pulses were beating in the top of his head. The bullets pattered on the stones and earth around the two like a hailstorm. The boy was becoming weak and his head swung to one side, oscillating like a top.

"See how the sun shines in old Kentucky!" he said.

"Yes, it shines, Billy. But the rebels are coming, and they are so near I can see their eyes shining too. Just hear the bullets whistle!"

"It's like music, isn't it?"

"The music of hell! Hold up your head, Billy! What!—dead! Poor boy, he died like a hero!"

Sibley was wounded in a half dozen places, and sank to his knees. He was unable to reload his rifle; but the little pulses were still beating in the top of his head, the red mist was yet there, and he continued to shout defiance. Fresh volleys swept the field, and the next moment no voice was heard in the gully save that of the whistling bullets.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SONG OF THE SHELL

THUS we witnessed the drunken squad's last stand.

"At least, they died like brave men," said Shaftoe.

"Was it of any use?" I asked. "They were merely a bubble in the flood."

"Who knows?" replied the regular.

We pressed on in our attempt to join Sherman, who alone had stood firm before the first attack, and was now receiving shock after shock from increasing numbers, determined to drive him back, as they had driven back the others. Bullets swept the field before and behind us, and over our heads flew the shells. I had felt a great terror at first, but a revulsion came and soon I began to swell with a foolish pride of indifference. Shaftoe was on his knees, seeking the shelter of every rock, and tree, and hillock that came in his way. I was walking upright. The regular suddenly seized me by the waist and dragged me down.

"I'm not a coward!" I cried angrily.

"No, but you're a fool, and that's as bad or worse," replied the regular, phlegmatically.

I made another effort to rise, but he held me back.

"Raw volunteers like you," continued Shaftoe, in a fatherly tone, "are always one of two things: either an infernal coward or a regular Hector. Usually they are both in the space of an hour; and one is as bad as another. Now, if you are shot dead going across this field,

of what use is it? You are sent here by your Government to get killed to some purpose. This would be to no purpose at all; and you would be a fraud upon your country, taking her pay and pretending to be killed in her service, when you give no service, and get yourself killed merely to gratify a boiling hot pride purely personal to yourself. Keep down, and try to earn your wages honestly."

The regular's face was impassive, but I concluded to take his advice, and crawl, instead of walk.

The ghastly traces of the battle thickened as we advanced. The ground was covered with the fallen, most of them slain in isolated fighting; some in single combat. A stream of wounded, each following the other in Indian file, passed us on their way to the rear. It was a blood-stained and halting line, but neither the blood nor the weakness impressed me like their silence. No man uttered a word. Not a groan was heard. Grim and unspeaking, every one nursed his own wound, enduring it without complaint and staggering on with the strength that was left to him. It was a solemn procession that never ceased.

"They are becoming veterans," said Shaftoe, with deep sympathy, "and they are paying the price of it." A minute later we were with Sherman, behind the little church of Shiloh and at the heart of the conflict.

Few of the Northern troops at this point had ever been in battle before, but led by a born general, one who never lost his presence of mind, and could take in a battlefield at a glance, they set their feet in the earth, and resolved not to give back, though the heap of dead in their front ranks grew fast and the stream of wounded in the rear thickened. The places of the dead and the hurt were taken by others, the *débris* of broken brigades, gathering instinctively around Sherman as the chief core of resistance.

The Southern army seemed to understand that it must uproot Sherman if it would win fully, and increased its strokes. Already victorious elsewhere, heavy gun after heavy gun was brought forward, and added to the unceasing shower of iron and lead that beat upon our lines, seeking to annihilate us and complete the victory.

"Now you can fight, Henry, and fight with all your might!" shouted the regular in my ear.

The savage instinct, that loves fighting because it represents supreme physical force, rose steadily in me. I forgot that I was a civilized human being, and reloading my rifle I fired again and again into the gray-coated mass. The flame was in my blood.

Grant at Savannah, nine miles away, heard the roaring of the guns and arrived upon the field at ten o'clock, sending urgent messages to Nelson and Buell to hurry on. Noon came and the sun shone over the centre of the earth, taking no note of the battle, pouring out all its rays of red and gold in honour of a fair, spring day. Those rays did not pierce the canopy of smoke which hung over the field of Shiloh; only a haze seeped through, and we fought in the twilight of a great vault, of which the earth was the floor and the floating smoke the roof—a vault filled with the shouts of men, the roar of guns, and the flash of the cannon and rifle fire. The hostile lines were often hid from my sight by the rolling clouds of smoke, which, caught by some stray breeze, would lift presently, disclosing again the thousands of hot faces, the bayonets, and the cannon.

I began to feel pride in both combatants—the pride of a race and its valour. People had talked of earlier times when men were braver and more enduring than now, built on a more heroic scale, but I had never read of any battle in which they fought more fiercely and with steadier courage and endurance than the one

which now swelled around me, and of which I was a part. Perhaps it was not a thing for pride, nevertheless I knew that all would feel it.

The roar of detached combats to the right and to the left came to us, though subdued to a minor note by the thunder of our own, which seemed to me to culminate directly in our front. The clouds of smoke sank lower and the stray winds drove them into the faces of one and then the other; the heavy sickening odour of mingled blood and gunpowder permeated the forest, and the burning trees gave forth sparks in myriads. Twisting columns and pyramids of smoke sometimes hid all but the faces of our assailants, and at the moment they seemed to us to swing in the air.

The dominant note of the battle was still the song of the shell—a fierce, triumphant cry, more like a shriek—an insistent, continuous sound, shrill, piercing, rising and falling perhaps, but never ceasing to drum upon the ears of all the eighty thousand engaged in that combat—a song that swept through the oak woods, not without a certain rhythm and music. It was the deepest impression made upon the men who survived that day and the next—ask them and they will tell you so—the hissing of the shell and the shrapnel, the screaming flight of the missile through the air, its bursting, and then the short, fierce buzz of the fragments of steel or iron, or the wheet-wheet of the leaden bullets from the shrapnel.

It was a sound so full of ferocity and malignant triumph that we who fought there can never forget it. I often hear it echoing in my ears—even now, when the rank grass and bushes have grown long ago over the lost skeletons of the slain, and peace and silence reign again in the Shiloh woods—as fierce and insistent as ever, that old song of the shell that was sung when so many good men slew each other.

The fire of the enemy sank without warning, the



sudden decrease of sound producing the effect of silence, though it was far from being such.

"They can not drive us back now!" I cried joyfully. "They have given up!"

"Not so," said Shaftoe. "The most dangerous time has come. Listen to the trumpets!"

Clear and full the voice of the Southern trumpets rose above the softened note of the battle, resounding and joyous, as if there had been nothing that day for man save pleasure, calling the hunters to the chase.

"Can't you understand that?" asked Shaftoe. "No man ever spoke plainer English. It says: 'Come on, boys, come on; gather all your strength for one big rush, and we'll drive the Yankees into the river!'" He added in a lower voice, "And maybe they'll do it, too."

The face of the regular was anxious, but it showed some pride, too. The raw levies—his boys, he had called those in his own company—were acquiring discipline and steadiness faster than he had ever hoped, and the sun would set upon every one a veteran, if he lived.

The clouds of smoke lifted, the plumes of flank sank, the notes of the trumpet died, and the long lines of the Southern army swept forward again among the trees and over the hillocks with their carpets of dead and wounded, as if propelled by a single hand. The front of our brigades burst into fire, the Southern batteries replied, and once again the shells and shrapnel filled the air. I saw the enemy coming nearer and nearer, and in all the activity of the defence I never forgot to watch their faces. I saw holes broken in their ranks by shells, shrapnel, and grapeshot. Lines of men were swept down by the hail of bullets that beat upon them. They did not stop, nor did hesitation interrupt their onward rush. I realized that this was the supreme effort which Shaftoe had said was coming; and as the iron and lead fell upon the Southerners I won-



dered how long they could stand it, feeling at the same time a pride that they stood it so well. For were they not of my own South?

"Those boys coming against us are veterans now!" shouted Shaftoe in my ear. "If they cross that ravine in front of us—well, we are theirs."

The Southern ranks, terribly thinned by the fire of the cannon and rifles, were almost at the edge of the ravine, but, borne on by physical and mental impetus, none stopped save those who had fallen.

Our fire doubled in intensity. The front line of the Southerners reached the edge of the ravine and melted there before the shells and bullets; the second line rushed into its place and then plunged into the ravine, appearing the next instant on our side.

All became a confused and terrible blur, and presently I heard a cry of despair. Our whole line had been pressed back and we were losing the battle. A shout of triumph from the enemy rose and filled the air, striking to our hearts. Then the Southerners came again with a rush as fierce as the others, and once more we were forced back toward the river, yielding the ground foot by foot, though we left it red behind us.

The troops that yet lived, worn by long hours of fighting—the regiments cut to ribbons—could not stand the repeated shocks. The Southerners continued to push us back slowly. One of our brigades faltered and began to retreat more rapidly. The Southerners threw themselves upon it at this, the critical moment, when the minds of the men hovered between fighting to the end and the folly of fighting longer. The brigade, struck at such a time, was paralyzed. It ceased to be an organized body, fell apart, divided into companies, then the companies broke up, dissolved like dew under the sun, and the brigade existed no longer, just a huddled mass of fleeing men, pelted by steel and lead, and urged on in their flight. Those of us

who yet stood were cut off; but led by Sherman, we seized a hill and clung to it, seeking to hold the head of the bridge across the marshes of Snake Creek, over which Wallace, who was nearest to us, must come to our relief, if he came at all.

I felt like one shut up in a furnace, and I gazed into the face of Shaftoe for comfort, finding none there. A shell with a new note flew high over my head, and, looking at its flight for a moment, I saw that it passed on and fell among the enemy, a fresh salute to the charging squares. It was followed by another and then another. Our troops began to shout with new hope. We had been pushed so far back toward the Tennessee that two of the Northern gunboats in the river opened fire over our heads and into the enemy—a water battery welcome beyond compare. It was the first help that came to us in eight hours of fighting, and we drew encouragement from it, feeling that if we were succoured thus at the last moment we might expect yet more. The trails of fire made by the shells seemed beautiful to us, and our spirit increased for a resistance still more stubborn. We dug our feet deeper into the earth and clung to the hills covering the bridge head. Nothing could drive us back farther. Our numbers melted away, but not faster than those of our assailants. We gave blow for blow.

The day was waning, and the night, tinged red by the cannon blaze, was at hand. Many of the Southern soldiers considered the battle gloriously and completely won. They had taken thirty cannon, and thousands of prisoners were in their hands. Rejoicing at the sight of the plenty in our captured camp, so unlike their own want, they scattered to pick up plunder, and, above all, the superior Northern arms. The camp was luxury to them, for it was full of provisions, and these Southerners already knew what it was to march and fight on empty stomachs and bare feet. They had made a great

journey and fought a great battle, and they had not eaten in forty-eight hours. They believed that the time to take their reward had come, and they took it, shouting to each other their joy and congratulations. Discipline was relaxed and their army lost cohesion. Johnston, their brave leader, conspicuous on horseback, had been killed earlier in the day at the head of his troops, and the other generals failed to grasp his plans and make his victory secure. Sherman still held the bridge head, and all the great qualities of our chief commander, Grant, were coming out. Silent, unyielding, he knew that he had lost one battle, but he determined to win another.

The sun was going down upon this sanguinary combat. A great globe of red and gold, it hung just above the forest, in the west, throwing only a few rays through the thick clouds of smoke that rolled over the battlefield. The twilight deepened in the dim woods, but before the night could come the Southerners rushed upon a new battery that had been formed at the river's bank, determined that the long delayed completeness of their triumph should yet be won. Gun after gun was discharged point blank into their charging lines. The man who had known how to form the battery knew also how to use it. The blaze of the cannon was magnified and intensified in the dark. It seemed to the Southerners that they were rushing into the mouths of furnaces; yet they came on, to be broken by the showers of projectiles, to stumble over their own fallen, to reform their lines and to charge again. A wide stream of shells from the gunboats in the river, curved over the battery and plunged among them. They formed a battery of their own, but it was shattered by the fire of its heavier Northern antagonist. The cannoneers were killed and the guns dismounted. Nevertheless, the infantry still attacked.

A boy in the Northern battery waved his hat and

pointed to the river. The men looked behind them for the first time and a shout of triumph and joy arose. The steamers were bringing fresh troops across the Tennessee. Nelson's division had come up and would soon be in the battle. These raw men, from Ohio and Indiana chiefly, landing, were compelled to form among a mob of fugitives and of wounded who had been able to come off the field. They were faced immediately by one of the most terrible aspects of war—crowds of frightened men, many of them badly hurt, some who had been gallant soldiers until panic overtook them, nearly all believing that the end of the world was at hand; while above them on the bank, in the twilight, the battle thundered as it had thundered all that long day, and over their heads the fire of the gunboats curved and streamed. But they went up the bank and to the relief of their comrades, pressed so hard and so long. They were received there in a voiceless welcome, the depth of which none can know save those who have fought all day a losing fight, until, at the twelfth hour, help comes.

The Southerners made one last charge upon the battery, and, like the others, it was beaten back. Nothing availed against those cannon mouths. The defenders now outnumbered the assailants, who were worn to the bone by their work. The night was at hand, and all knew that a further attack upon the battery meant a further loss of life and no result. The word was given to retire, and the unbeaten Southern troops fell back to the field that they had won, and from the battery that they had not won, leaving us at last to rest.

The sun sank behind the trees, and its light went out. All the firing ceased suddenly. Darkness swept down over the field and enveloped the two armies, the living and the dead.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE NIGHT BETWEEN

THE most solemn night yet known by the New World began. The killed were strewn far through the dim forest, lying as they had fallen, untouched by friendly or unfriendly hands; and, with the dead, between the lines of the two hostile armies which expected to fight again on the morrow, lay ten thousand wounded.

The night was close, hot, and sticky, full of the damp heat that gathers sometimes in the Mississippi Valley and hangs like vapours over the earth, clogging the throats of those who try to breathe. It rolled up in wet coils from the south, and lay heavy in the lungs of the men. No wind stirred the forest, the branches of the trees hanging dead and motionless in the air. Clouds gathered over all the skies, increasing the heat of the night. Not a single star came out. The forest, set on fire by the shells, burned slowly here and there, but the flames were hidden or obscured by the columns of smoke that still rose from the thickets, and the sparks gave forth no cheerful twinkle. The gunboats in the river fired a shell every ten minutes toward the Southern army, and the heavy note echoed like the slow tolling of a funeral bell. The fires of the hostile armies rose within sight of one another, but the rifles were silent. The men had no strength left, and what would come they must guard for the morrow.

When the last shot was fired, I leaned against a cannon wheel and looked at the forest in which the Southern army lay. It had been ten or twelve hours since that army sprang out of the woods and threw itself upon us, but I felt that I had lived a second life in the brief space. Some one dropped a hand upon my shoulder.

"Food! Henry, food!" said Shaftoe cheerfully. "Now is the time to eat. In fact, it came some time ago; but those impolite rebels insisted on taking supper with us, and we had to put them out of the house."

"I don't want to eat. I want to sleep."

"Maybe you don't want to eat, but food will be good for you, and the Government demands that you eat. When you enlisted you entered into a contract that contains only one provision, namely, that you do, at any and all times, and under any and all circumstances, whatever your officer, who is the representative of the Government, no matter how great a fool he may be, orders you to do. The Government now tells you to eat, not because food will taste good to the hungry, but because it will need your strength for the battle tomorrow. I have spent thirty years learning this, and I know. Come on, and don't be a fool."

I followed without another word, knowing that Shaftoe was right. We went but a few steps. Soldiers were lighting the supper fires on the hills overlooking the river, the hills to which Sherman and some others had clung so tightly, and which were all that was left to us. The Southern army held the rest of the field, and lay coiled before us.

The fires burned slowly, the flames rising straight up and showing the utter deadness of the air. The clouds grew thicker and settled lower, giving a ghostly effect to the dim forest in which the flames quivered like phantom lights. The air was a dull, sodden gray, and the river showed a sombre yellow, winding in a broad band among the hills and woods. I shivered,



though not with cold, and looked again at the Southern camp fires.

"Why is there no fighting?" I asked. "We are within gunshot of each other."

"Because it is not necessary," replied Shaftoe. "It is another of the Government stipulations that you do not fight when it is not needed, as thereby you would waste your strength and ammunition, and both are expensive—especially the latter. Those men over there are doing us no harm, why should we shoot at them?"

Shaftoe had become a cook, turning himself with ready skill to the new need. A rich and accessible North always gave plenty of food to its armies, and the stores were hurried up from the steamers and across the river. The odour made me hungry and I ate.

The fires blazed up on either side of the river, casting long gleams of light over the dusky stream, and faintly touching the still forests. The steamers and tugs were bringing across the troops, and the air was filled with their puffing and panting. Innumerable columns of smoke added to the closeness of the sultry night.

The lights on the Tennessee seemed to me, lying on a hilltop among the trees, so many quivering stars. Their glare was shaded and softened by the distance, and they appeared, twinkled, and went out, and then appeared again. The water near them gleamed in spots of silver and gold as the flames fell, and sometimes when the flash was brightest I saw the faces of the men on the boats, pale, lips compressed, and always looking anxiously toward the shore that had been the battle shore. There was the same absence of talk that had marked the passage of the first detachment, only the clashing of arms, the puffing of the steamers, the rattle of their machinery, and occasionally the voice of an officer—the whole a picture of solemn majesty.

The presence of the river and its great winding



column of water had no effect upon the closeness of the night. The heat seemed to pile in clouds of vapour upon the stream. The battle smoke was still hanging over the forests, and wisps of it floated off toward the skies.

Physical exhaustion and the terrible excitement and strain of the day put me in an unreal mental state, in which distorted and fantastic images danced before my eyes. I stared at the forest, the yellow river with its twinkling lights, and then at the pale faces of soldiers appearing and reappearing. But all were phantoms. The figures on the boats were no more than the ghosts of men, the river took some strange new colour, and the lights passing and repassing became so faint at times that I could not tell whether I saw them or they were mere fancy. I tried to count them, but they danced about in the weirdest fashion; and losing myself in a maze, I turned my eyes back to the forest in front. The fires there were sinking. The Southern army, exhausted by its tremendous march and equally tremendous battle, was overpowered by lethargy.

I watched the Southern fires die, one by one, and then listened, ear to the earth, for the unheard plaints of the wounded. I could not take my mind from them. I wondered that they did not cry out. I strained my eyes into the darkness, but I could not see the fallen men, only the last feeble lights of the Southern camp fires and the torn and trampled forest. It looked as if a succession of fierce storms had swept over it. In one place an entire group of trees had been cut down by cannon balls and lay in a tangled mass. Everywhere boughs were scattered, and the thickets had been torn alike by the sweep of shells and bullets and the passing of men. Near me were the remains of a cannon, both wheels shot off and the barrel split at its muzzle, looking, with its empty mouth and torn body, like an emblem of death and decay. I did not know to which

army the gun had belonged. The trees, set on fire by the exploding shells, still burned languidly in patches, emitting few sparks, and the smoke floated off to join the canopy that had formed during the battle.

I could not sleep, yet the night became dimmer. Everything was in wavy lines. The hum of the crossing troops reached me. Now and then a word floated up to my ears, but my senses while willing to be benumbed, refused to be lulled.

"Why don't you sleep?" asked Shaftoe.

"I can not fight all day for the first time and then sleep as if I were at home in my bed. You'll have to wait until I form the habit," I replied. And then I added, "Why don't you go to sleep yourself?"

Shaftoe did not reply, because his unconcern was not as great as his pretence. His eyes were sad when they strained into the dimness where the wounded lay. My own closed by and bye, and then I heard shots. The Southern army again sprang from the brushwood and the battle raged as before through the forest to the roar of artillery, the crash of eighty thousand rifles, the shouts of charging men, and with all the real force and fury of a great struggle. I opened my eyes and found that I had fallen into an uneasy sleep and still more troubled dream, repeating the history of the day.

"I heard the thunder of the charge again," I said, with a mirthless laugh, to Shaftoe, who was sitting up and wide-awake.

"You heard thunder, but it was the thunder of God," replied the regular, with a sententiousness rare in him. "Listen to it!"

The thunder in fact was grumbling in the southwest, and I saw that while I slept the heavens had become darker. Not a shred of blue showed. A flash of lightning curved across the sky, the air stirred, and the flames of the trees that yet burned quivered before it.

“A storm is coming,” I said. “A fresh horror.”

“Not a horror at all,” replied the regular. “Think what a blessing the cool rain will be on the hot faces of the wounded lying among all those trees and thickets. Let it come.”

A gust of wind swept over us. The close damp clouds of heat were lifted, the coils of smoke and vapour were driven away over the trees. The thunder cracked directly overhead, a flash of lightning split the entire sky, and the rain, driven on in torrents by the wind, rushed upon us. The camp was drenched in a moment, the earth ran water. The flames in the trees and the smouldering camp fires were alike put out, and the embers steaming in their place cast out smoke until the sweep of the rain extinguished them too. The air was filled with twigs and the fragments of boughs, picked up by the gusts, but the wind soon passed on and left only the rain, now pouring steadily out of one vast cloud that covered all the sky. The lightning ceased, only the thunder grumbled distinctly, and all other sounds were subdued by the regular beat of the rain.

The battlefield then sank into unbroken darkness, the Southern lines became invisible, but the passage of the Army of the Ohio over the river, boat by boat, continued as steadily as ever. That was a matter which could not halt for weather. The rain ceased by and bye, the blue crept into the sky, the stars came out, and I fell asleep again on the soaking earth.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SECOND DAY

THE trumpets were sounding the awakening call, and I rose from the damp earth, finding it good to feel myself a man again. The rays of the sun were flushing the heavens, and the river, yellow and sombre at night, glittered beneath the light now, in a vast sheet of silver. Beads of rain still sparkled on the trees.

I looked toward the Southern lines, but instead of the Southern camp fires, I saw only a great army in blue, the sun flashing over rifle barrels, polished bayonets, rows of cannon, and eager faces, the youth of the Northwest, and my own Kentucky, ready for a new battle. I was dazzled for a moment, and cried out:

“What is that?”

“That,” said the ever-ready Shaftoe, “is the Army of the Ohio, more than thirty thousand strong, which, luckily for us, now stands between our remains and the Southern forces. It will open the battle as soon as you drink your coffee. Hurry up, please; the Army of the Ohio is waiting.”

The regular was full of good humour, rejoicing at the presence of the new force which had already moved forward, occupying almost without resistance many of the positions lost the day before, and I began to share his high spirits and expectations.

A vast murmur arose as the untried army in front formed for battle. Up rose the sun, and the heavy me-

tallic clash that told of moving arms began. A band, just landed from one of the boats and posted on the bank, was playing, its martial note swelling through the forest.

The men around me began to grow impatient. They had forgotten their toil and wounds, and asked to be led again to the charge. But there was a pause. Each army seemed to await the attack of the other. Perhaps they had suddenly remembered the slaughter of the day before. Higher went the sun. All the eastern heavens were suffused with red and gold. The day was advancing. The cannon boomed far to our right, the report echoing with wonderful distinctness through the forest, which had been strangely silent before, save for the murmur of two great armies. The sound repeating itself rolled away among the hills, a clear and threatening echo. A column of blue smoke arose.

The second battle had begun.

A shout, great in volume, went down our ranks, and all the drummers began to beat their drums. Fifty thousand men swung forward, and advancing over the field that had been lost the day before, threw themselves upon the enemy who waited calmly. Already the skirmishers, following the signal of the cannon shot, had opened fire from the shelter of trees, and stumps, and hillocks, creeping up, like Indians, each choosing the man for his bullet. But the crackle of their rifles was drowned by the heavy tread of the army and the roar of the batteries which had opened with all the great guns.

The precision of the advance, the regularity of the brigades, the flashing of steel, and the vivid colours in the brilliant morning sun filled me with admiration, and, being in the rear now, where I could see, I looked upon the coming battle as a great spectacle. I did not think how a single day's fighting had hardened me and driven the mere personal element, the feeling for suffer-

ing, the anxiety for self, out of my mind, but all my attention was on the magnificent panorama of conflict spread out before my eyes, and its probable result.

The Southern army was motionless, standing in a solid mass that showed no sign of retreat or yielding. The firing increased, a blaze of light ran along the entire front of our lines, the flight of the bullets and shells rose to that steady whistle which was now such a familiar sound in my ears, but the South was still silent.

As I looked again with eager eyes, I suddenly saw the Southern cannoneers bend over their guns, and the front rank men raise their rifles to their shoulders. Then the Southern army was hidden for a moment by the flame, and the bullets sang many songs in our ears. Their shells, too, met the Northern shells, and the Southern squares by a movement that was almost involuntary swung forward to meet us. The smoke in a few moments enveloped the hills, the forests, and the armies, only the flash of the firing and the steel of the bayonets showing through it. I advanced, almost shoulder to shoulder with the man on my right and the man on my left, feeling that the army was a mighty whole, of which I was one of the minute parts.

But our army stopped suddenly and quivered as if it had received a great blow. I was incredulous for a moment. I had not believed a check possible. Yet it was a fact. The squares not only stopped; they reeled back. Then they recovered the yard or two they had lost, but stopped there again, staggering.

The army groaned, not so much in pain as in anger. It had struck a rock when it was expected to move steadily on, and the feeling was not good. It was now our troops who were marching into the mouths of guns, and the feeling was unpleasant. Sharpshooters swarmed on our flanks and stung us with an unceasing fire that



annoyed as much as the cannon and was almost as deadly. Every tree, hillock, and stone became a fortress against us. The enemy, whom we had expected to find worn out and weak from his work and losses of the day before, suddenly developed wonderful strength and energy, and it became apparent to us that all the ground we would take we must buy at its full price.

The triumphant shout—the long rebel yell, shrill and piercing, swelling even above the tumult of the combat—rose again in the Southern lines, and thus the new battle swung to and fro, the North confident of winning with its fresh troops, the South refusing to yield.

Grant, as on the day before, crossed the field from side to side, again and again, watching the battle lines and the shifting fortunes of the conflict, hurrying fresh troops to weak places and massing the artillery. He saw us forced back by the furious and repeated attacks of the South, and determining to break the centre of their army, he directed three batteries to open on that point. These great guns began their work from slight elevations, and in a moment a concentric fire, tremendous in volume, was poured upon the Southern centre. The men were swept away in rows and groups, others took their places, but the fire of the three batteries, coming from three separate points, and all beating upon the same spot, increased in volume, smashing companies and regiments, a stream of metal that scooped out the Southern centre as a plough throws up the earth. The Southern general rushed new men to the threatened centre, but they in turn were annihilated by the batteries. Nothing could stand against the fire of those great guns delivered with such swiftness and accuracy. They swept a path clean of living men and the Southern force was cut apart; the wings were there, but the centre was gone, the backbone broken, and cohesion lost. Then Grant lifted up our army again and hurled it at the



enemy. The South yielded to the shock—only a little—but it was forced back.

I shouted with the others when I felt that we were going forward again, and the hot tide rose anew in my veins. I was half blinded by the smoke which the breath of the guns blew in clouds, but the sense of feeling told me that the army was advancing.

Fortune, wanton in her fickleness, returned to the side of the heavier battalions, and our advance, begun when the Southern centre was broken, continued. Yet the Southern men still fought with undimmed courage, knowing that they were losers at last, but determined to lose like heroes. The fighting was often hand to hand again, companies and regiments mingling in the woods, but always now our line advanced and the Southern line was borne back.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A STRAY SHOT

THE overwhelming Northern army pressed continually against the weakened Southern force, which, exhausted by two days of fierce conflict, nevertheless fought on for the sake of the pride and stubbornness which form such important factors in bravery, and which help to make wars. Our numerous brigades, extending in long lines, threatened to enwrap our opponent and strangle him, but the light troops and sharpshooters on the flanks of the Southern army still buzzed and stung like bees and held back the heavy coils that pressed incessantly and too closely.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the battle was lost to the South—lost after it was once won. Beauregard, the Southern general, at last commanded the buglers to sound the retreat—a sad note to those gallant men, though they had long known that it must come. Losing but undismayed, its order preserved and ready to fight again if attacked, the Southern army passed off the field, disappearing in the forest from which it had emerged so suddenly, and the battle of Shiloh was over. As many had been killed or wounded as at Austerlitz or Jena, with a percentage of loss far greater, and the song of the shell had just begun.

Our army did not pursue. It, too, was sorely wounded in the mighty struggle; and, having watched its enemy retire, turned back upon the field, where

nearly thirty thousand men had been killed or wounded. There it began to rest, count its dead, and relieve the wounded—and the last was the hardest task of all. Scouts were sent out to search the woods and see whether danger of a new attack existed. I was among these; and renewing my supply of ammunition I entered the forest, following the trail of the retreating Southerners. I had not reached the extreme limits of the battlefield before I saw gray figures hovering among the tree trunks. I guessed them to be Southern skirmishers, covering the rear of their army, and going closer for better information, I received a bullet through my legs, and, falling to the ground, was unable to rise again.

I felt no great pain when the bullet struck, and my first emotion was surprise that I could not regain my feet. Then the sharp ache of a broken bone began to smite me, and when I sat up I found that the right leg was the sufferer, but the bullet had gone on through the flesh of the left, and I was losing blood rapidly. I bound the wounds tightly with strips of my coat and waited for some one to come and take me back to camp.

Nobody came and I shouted for help; there was no response. The bandages stopped the flow of blood, but I became weak because of that already lost. My sight grew dim and for a little while the world wavered about me. Then I recalled my strength and tried to crawl over the ground, wishing to sit again by the camp fires and hear the voices of my comrades. The pain from my broken leg became so acute that I was forced to stop, and I lay there in silence, waiting. I wondered why no one came. Then I noticed that I was in a little hollow or depression, with thick woods on three sides of me, and searchers for the wounded might pass within a few yards without seeing the man who lay there.

I heard carts moving about the field two or three

times and shouted, hoping that they would hear me, but they passed on, and then I knew that my voice had become weak. I fell into a rage that I should be left there to die alone, with thousands so near, and it seemed to me the choicest and bitterest joke of fate that I should pass safely through a great battle, lasting two days, to fall after it was over by the chance bullet of some skirmisher, and to die alone in the forest in sight of the field that had witnessed so much heroism.

But little more than two hours of the afternoon had been left when I fell, yet the day seemed to linger long. The sun scorched me and I burned with thirst. The night had terrors for a wounded man alone in the woods, but I wished for its long, cool shadows across my face. My mind grew more active, physical power being taken from me, and I began to wander over wide reaches, coloured always by the heat that had crept into my veins. My own fate, shot down in such a manner after passing safely through the battle, seemed ridiculous and designed as a special humiliation. Millions of other bullets had missed me; this alone, when the chance was a million to one that it would miss me too, had put me on my back in a hollow, where I might meditate in the little time that was left to me on the ease with which fate upsets human plans.

I heard from afar the clatter of the camp, the blending of the many noises which help to make up the life of a great army, but they sank to a murmur as the sun went down and the night came.

I did not feel the expected joy when I saw the advancing darkness. The heat of the day passed, and the fever that was upon me loosened its grasp somewhat, but the night chilled me and made me afraid. I was overpowered by a deep sense of loneliness, and the nearness of the camp increased this feeling. I longed for companionship, even if it were only another wounded man, some one to talk to, a voice to be heard.

Looking in the direction of the camp I could see a faint pink glow, and I thought of the men by the supper fires, cheerful, telling each other of their escapes in the battle and rejoicing. Then I felt another bitter pang because I was an outcast, excluded from it all. I had fought as well as they, but reward was denied to me.

The darkness covered all the earth except in the direction of the camp, where the pink glow stood out against the black, and the boughs above me became dark gray and shadowy. Toward the middle of the field several trees, fired by the cannon shots, were burning in red cones—candles of the night I called them—and presently fainter lights began to glimmer in many places. They were the lanterns of those gathering up the dead, and I rejoiced, believing now that they would find me soon. I shouted again, but my voice brought nobody. I might as well have been alone in the wilderness. To all purposes I was.

I had felt the night before a deep sympathy for the wounded lying upon the field, but it was not so personal then as it became now. I could picture to my mind the vast suffering of the twenty thousand wounded, because I was one of them, and I longed for the sound of human voices and the touch of human hands. Alone and in the darkness, all the glory of battle and joy of strife faded from me.

The moon was out and threw silver bands and circles on the trees and grass, but in the pale glimmer the boughs above became more ghostly and seemed to wave at me. The lights on the field began to diminish, and soon I saw none. I fell through pure weakness into a sort of stupor, and was aroused from it by the tread of heavy feet.

"They are coming for me, at last!" were the unspoken words in my mind.

But the beat of feet was too rapid and heavy for men. Dozens of great red eyes looked at me through

the pale light, and behind the eyes I saw the dim outlines of gigantic forms. I believed myself at first to be dreaming, but then I knew that I was not. I knew the trees whose boughs bent over me, the curves of the ground, and yonder was the same pink glow that told where the camp lay.

I lifted myself upon my elbow and stared at the red eyes. The figures grew clearer in the dark, and I saw a troop of riderless cavalry horses, forty, fifty, perhaps more, all with the saddles yet on them, and some with a sabre slash or the track of a pistol ball on their flanks. They stood before me in regular lines, heads erect, muscles drawn, eyes flashing, as if their riders still rode them, ready for the charge. It seemed to me that every one was staring straight at me, and I remained upon my elbow looking into the long line of eyes that threatened me. I was in a chill of fear; they would gallop over my body, and that would be the end, the worst death of all.

I shouted, and the horses, wheeling about as if directed by a leader, galloped away in ordered ranks, their hoofbeats resounding on the earth until they died away in a distant echo.

I sank back and was glad that this danger had passed, but presently I heard the hoofbeats again, coming from another part of the field and echoing in the regular tread of an advancing squadron. On came the riderless horses, heads erect, eyes glittering through the dark, and again I was in terror lest they gallop over me. I fancied that I could feel their breath on my face, but they turned a second time, when the hoofs of the front line were within a few feet of me, and galloped away, their forms again fading and their hoofbeats dying. Perhaps now they would let me rest! In a few minutes they came back, their steel-shod hoofs cutting the soft earth, and great eyes staring at the prostrate form of the man before them. I won-

dered why they worried me so and kept me in such incessant fear of death under their weight. Had I known it, I was in no danger; however close they might come to me, it would never be so close that the youngest of them all would plant a hoof upon me.

They came back again and again, eyes red, flanks heaving, and always stared at me as I lay there in the hollow. My fear began to pass by and bye, and their forms became dim. A veil floated down over my eyes and I remembered no more.



## CHAPTER XIX

### WHEN MY EYES OPENED

WHEN I opened my eyes again I was lying in a comfortable bed, and, except a mental languor, I felt as well as usual. I sought to move, but a sharp pain from my right leg shot upward through my body and bade me keep quiet. Then I looked around and saw that I was in my own room, the room that had been mine for more than fifteen years. Every familiar object was in its place, and there in the chair by the window was Madam Arlington, my grandmother, quite unchanged, wearing a dark gray dress, a white cap drawn tightly over her gray curls. She was sitting with the side of her face turned to me, and once more, as I had often done, I admired the strength of her features, the courage and resolution shown in every curve.

My first emotion, bewildered and vague though it was, expressed devout gratitude and thankfulness. My eyes had closed on the bloody wilderness of Shiloh, and they opened here on this peaceful scene.

I must have made a slight movement, one that could be heard, as my grandmother rose from her chair and came to my bedside. Her eyes met mine and I saw the joy in them, but otherwise she repressed all emotion. In truth, Madam Arlington was never a demonstrative woman.

"You are in your right mind again, Henry, and I can give thanks," she said. "You have talked of

strange scenes and awful battlefields, but, please God, you shall now rest."

"How did I come here, grandmother?" I asked, and I was surprised to find how weak was my voice.

"It was William Penn. You owe your life to him. After he took you that message he returned to follow again behind the army. He wished to go, and I—a foolish old woman I thought myself then—told him that he might. He saw part of the great battle, and he says that it was the most terrible scene in all the world—he is right, I know. When they grew tired of killing each other he went to your regiment and asked for you, but you were not there. Then he hunted over the field until he found you in a little hollow, and they say you would have died if he had not come. A big soldier—Step toe, or something like that was his name—who seemed to care very much for you, helped William Penn, and he came away with you. He travelled slowly, but he brought you in two days from Shiloh to your own home."

I wished to ask questions, but Madam Arlington, with that old, stern air that she had often worn when I was a lad of ten or twelve, bade me be silent. Then she brought me food which I ate with a good appetite, and after that I was ordered to remain quiet and sleep if I could, while she resumed her seat by the window.

I felt happy somehow. I think it was the contrast between the scene on which my eyes closed and that on which they awakened. My bed lay where I could see the flowers on the lawn through an angle of the window, and presently William Penn, in his shirt sleeves, a small garden hoe on his shoulder, passed my line of vision. The old hero! A great bar of sunlight entering the window lay across the floor. A fly hummed peacefully against the curtain. Shiloh seemed far away, vague and unreal, and this was like my boyhood.

I fell asleep presently and when I awoke again the

sunlight was fading before the misty gray of twilight. I heard the rustle of a skirt and a light step; when I turned my head I saw no one. My grandmother came back presently, carrying a lamp in her hand, but the step that I had heard seemed to me more elastic than that of any woman of sixty-five.

Madam Arlington must have read my look of inquiry, as she raised her finger prohibitively. Nevertheless, I asked:

“Was not some one here, grandmother?”

“Undoubtedly,” she replied, a gleam of humour appearing in her eyes. “You were here. I don’t think you could have left.”

“But some one, neither you nor I,” I insisted.

“Yes,” replied my grandmother. “She asked me not to tell and I promised. It was Elinor Maynard. It is not the first time that she has been in this house since you arrived. In fact she has been here nearly all the time, and she came with you.”

“Came with me!” I exclaimed in wonder.

“Yes, came with you. When William Penn found you and started home with you he sent word for her. Ah, that William Penn is a wiser man than you or perhaps I ever thought he was. She met you on the way: and if you owe your life to William Penn, you owe it to her too. But I always knew that she was the best girl in all this world. Now, not another word, you have enough to think over, perhaps too much.”

I could have smiled any other time at Madam Arlington’s calling Elinor the best girl in the world, when years ago she had forbidden me to know the terrible little Yankee, the representative of strange and uncouth doctrines. Yet my good grandmother would have denied all charges of inconsistency.

She left the room presently and I obeyed her order to think over what I had heard. She had spoken truly when she said that it was enough. My thoughts were

more pleasant than ever, and I confess that they were more of Elinor than of William Penn or Madam Arlington.

It was William Penn who brought me my supper, and when I told him how grateful I was for his saving my life he shook his head again and again with great emphasis.

"I was glad enough to get away from that dreadful field," he said. "I saw the battle, Henry, at a safe distance, I am thankful to say! and may the Lord save me from another such sight. I hope that I shall never become of such little use that they will think of making a soldier of me."

I did not see Elinor for a day, but my grandmother told me more of her the next morning. Her aunt, Mrs. Maynard, forbade her visits to our house, but Elinor came nevertheless. The strange prejudice of Mrs. Maynard against me seemed to be growing. She had resolved that her niece should marry Colonel Varian. She seemed to be completely under his spell, and he fed her ambition too, because she thought that he would be one of the greatest men in the new Southern republic. She was furious when Elinor came to help bring me back home, but she could not prevent it, and only Elinor's courage and will enabled her to defy her aunt's threats. All these things Madam Arlington told me in a voice in which anger and indignation always appeared, and I knew that Elinor had at least one war-like friend.

It was in the afternoon that Elinor came to me, pale and quiet. She gave me her hand very simply and did not seek to withdraw it.

"Elinor," I said, "I know that you helped William Penn to bring me here."

"Should I not have done so?" she asked, the red creeping into her cheeks.

"Would you have gone thus for Varian?"

"You ask too many questions. Tell me of the battle. We have had little true news of it."

Yet I believed now that she would not have gone for Varian, that from the first she had feared and not liked him. And I was happy in the thought. Then I talked of Shiloh. I told of the surprise in the great woods; the apparition of the Southern army springing from the thickets; the long fight of the day when we were steadily pushed backward; the drunken squad's last stand; the passage of the second army over the river in the night; the battle of the second day, and my own misadventure. She listened to it all with a flushed cheek, and when I described the drunken squad's last stand, she said:

"At least they had courage and devotion, if nothing else."

Madam Arlington entered at this moment and was properly indignant.

"Too much talking," she said; "and talking is not good for a wounded man."

Then she sent Elinor out of the room and bade me go to sleep. Thus several days passed and my injuries healed rapidly. They were attended by a good doctor, the man who had piloted me through most of my youthful ailments, and I was helped by a strong constitution and the best of nursing. Elinor came to see me three times, and I learned now what a help it is to a young man in love to be wounded in battle. My grandmother was constitutionally a woman of even temperament, but I had not seen her so happy in years, and I soon discovered the cause. She was conducting a furious epistolary correspondence with Mrs. Maynard on the subject of Elinor, who had been forbidden repeatedly to come to our house, but who came nevertheless. As Madam Arlington was having her way, she enjoyed the controversy to the utmost. Yet I was remorseful. I could not bear the thought that Elinor should be made

unhappy at her home on my account, and once I approached the subject, but she warned me away.

"My aunt has intentions which are not mine," she said. "I shall be compelled to disobey her in more than one respect."

I could not say more; but I remained troubled about her, although feeling a secret delight at her disobedience.

The day after this I heard a heavy step at the door, and a thickset man entered the room. It was Shaftoe.

"Still on your back when you ought to be chasing armies!" he said, with unconcealed joy. "How do you expect Grant to win battles when he hasn't got you with him?"

He was redolent of strength and life in the open air, and I listened eagerly to his budget of news. Grant had been following the Southern army since Shiloh, he said, and gathering reinforcements for other combats. He really thought that Grant knew something about commanding troops and was not a mere political general. Affairs were going badly in the East, but they were in our favour in the West. The one was a set-off to the other, and nothing was sure except that it would be a huge war.

"I got a short leave of absence," said Shaftoe; "and as it isn't far up here, I've slipped across the country to see you. I met two women before I came in here. One was young, and she has the prettiest face that I've ever seen. I remember her in Washington, but I did not notice her so closely then. I'm thinking she's *the* girl, Henry. The other was old—and I want to give you a piece of advice right now, Henry—never argue politics with a woman. She doesn't keep to the rules at all, and proof that might convince the most reasonable man in the world is nothing to her. The old lady saw my blue uniform, and she didn't like it—flew into a tantrum—said I was a robber and a murderer, coming



down here to kill good Southerners and take away their property. I said that my uniform was of the same colour that you wore, and that I was your particular friend. Then she relented and let me come in, though I'm not sure that she's not watching somewhere to see that I don't kill you."

I laughed, and subsequently had the pleasure, when I introduced Shaftoe to my grandmother, to see that they got along well together. He was wise enough to accede in silence to all her opinions, and to take his rebukes with a contrite spirit. I think that he would have risen high in her good graces—she even had hope of converting him—but he would stay only a few hours, being compelled to leave on the afternoon of the same day.

"However, I shall send a friend to represent me," he said, with a twinkling eye.

"Who is it?" I asked with curiosity.

"The Rev. Elkanah Armstrong," he replied. "The Rev. Elkanah became too zealous for the conversion of the rebels in some of the recent skirmishing and got a bullet in his left shoulder. It was not a serious wound, but he will have to rest, and I recommended this neighbourhood to him, thinking it would be pleasant to you both. He is at the little hotel down at the village, and, wound or no wound, he is ready to preach to anybody who will listen."

Shaftoe left an hour later, and Mr. Armstrong came the next day, his shoulder in a bandage, but as eager and zealous as ever. I found him good company, and through respect for his cloth my grandmother refrained from criticising his position in the war.



## CHAPTER XX

### A BENEFICENT JAILER

I WAS almost able to walk again when Elinor entered my room, showing excitement.

"O Henry," she said, "if you could only leave now!"

"I am doing very well. Why should I hurry?"

"The Southern troops have come."

Then she told me news at which I should not have been surprised, owing to the unsettled character of our State and the doubtful nature of all territory not directly occupied by either army. A considerable Southern force coming from the southeast had passed in the rear of the Northern army and invaded our region.

"And who do you think is its commander?" asked Elinor.

I could not guess.

"Colonel Varian," she replied, "and Aunt Ellen is exultant. She says that the Northern army is soon to be defeated, and that never again will it invade the South."

A detachment of Southern troops arrived that night, and its commander entered my room.

"What! Henry Kingsford here, and wounded, and my prisoner!" exclaimed a mellow voice. "You have only yourself to blame. Did I not warn you? Did I not tell you in Washington that the fire and spirit of the South would overcome all obstacles? You did fairly

well at Shiloh, but that was a trifle, sir. We shall sweep the Yankee chaff into the sea; we shall devour it like a fire in dry grass."

The man who showed so much enthusiasm and mixed his metaphors so finely was Major Titus Tyler, ruddy, healthy, and evidently glad to see me, his prisoner though I was.

"Henry," he repeated, "it fills my soul with delight to meet you again. I heard that a Yankee was here, but I did not know it was you, although I should have guessed it, as this is the house of your grandmother—a most noble specimen of the womanhood of the old school. Ah, if she were only a few years younger—no, if I were only a few years older—God bless my soul! I do not mean to be ungallant—I might stand in a relationship to you that would give me a right to bring you to your senses. The Lord never meant for you to be a Yankee, Henry; that's the reason he gave you that wound, and put you here out of the reach of harm. It was the only way to keep you from making a permanent fool of yourself."

I did not wish to be a prisoner, but since I had become one I was glad that my jailer was Major Titus Tyler. He brought with him a breeze of good humour. He delighted my grandmother with his ornate courtesy and absolute confidence in the complete triumph of the South. When I introduced him formally to Madam Arlington he bent halfway to the floor, and kissing her hand, said:

"Madam, I bow to a true representative of the glorious old South which we both love and honour."

"Major," she replied, "I am only an old woman, but I hope that I am a true patriot."

"Madam," he continued, "you cruelly abuse yourself when you say 'old woman.' There are a few rare beings who remain forever young. I trust that it is needless for me to say more."

He was full of gossip, and half of it was about Varian, under whose command he was, and who, he said, was proving himself to be a soldier of genius and a man of power. If his advice had been followed the battle of Shiloh would have resulted in a great Southern victory. Even now he was organizing dashing cavalry raids, which would cut off the Northern forces from all their communications and drive them into a corner, where their defeat would be a matter of course. His value in the field was equalled only by his worth in the Cabinet, and when the time was ripe he was sure to bring England and France to the help of the South. All Europe was for the South; and the two great warlike nations there, the one with the naval force and the other with the land force, were only waiting the word to interfere. But the South felt some hesitation about accepting help, as she did not wish to divide the honour of thrashing the Yankees. De Courcelles, he said, was with Varian. He had not been able to resist the temptation of winning glory, and he enlisted, behaving like a hero at Shiloh. Pembroke and Tourville were in the East with Lee, but he had not heard from them in a long time. Then he reverted to Shiloh, where he had fought under Varian.

“It was a great battle, Henry,” he said; “and we failed to win a victory only because our leader, Albert Sidney Johnston, was killed. History will say so.”

I did not know what history, which has many voices, would say, but I could not argue his pet point with the major.

No prisoner ever had a more lenient captor than I. It was my convenience and not his own that he seemed to consult. And “Would I object to this?” and “Only the necessity of war compels me to curtail your liberty, Henry,” and “You know that I think of you as a son and not as an enemy.” But he did not neglect his own

comfort. Major Titus Tyler was a wise man, accustomed to the best his world afforded, and all the luxuries that the house contained were soon at his service. They were offered, too, with a willing and generous hand. He remained a prime favourite with my grandmother, who saw to it personally that he had the finest. He described to her in glowing language the glories of the far South. We in Kentucky lived more after the Northern fashion, households seldom being luxurious; and the major told us how different was a home on the great plantations in the Gulf States.

"And I tell you, my dear Madam Arlington," he said, "that among civilized human beings only two kinds of government have any degree of permanency—a monarchy and an aristocratic republic. Day labourers and workmen, and, in fact, all people who are absorbed in daily business, can not develop a faculty for the higher forms of government. It needs leisure, madam; and none have leisure and at the same time a great stake in the country save the wealthy landed gentry. The North, with its shopkeepers and mechanics, must fall to pieces."

He found a willing disciple in my grandmother, who all her life had been a firm believer in the exclusive virtues of a landed aristocracy; and I, having learned wisdom, kept silent. He also preached his gospel to Elinor, who, I think, did not consider the subject the most important of the universe.

"What a woman she is growing to be!" said Major Tyler to me. "God bless my soul! but the South of my youth could boast no finer. I don't know, I don't know, perhaps I'm not too old yet, and the South will soon end this——"

I reminded him that he would commit bigamy if he married both my grandmother and Elinor.

"Don't be jealous, Henry," he said, laughing with great zest; "I'm no Mormon. In fact, I'm not a marry-

ing man at all; but if I were, maybe I could show you boys a trick or two."

And he threw back his shoulders, straightened his cravat, and examined himself in the glass with evident pleasure.

Everything went very smoothly with Major Titus Tyler until the Rev. Elkanah Armstrong came to see me again. Being a minister and theoretically a noncombatant, Mr. Armstrong was entirely free from danger of molestation, and he was also the kind of man who would not hesitate to express his opinions without regard to time or place.

"Sheer folly! sheer folly, sir!" he said to Major Tyler. "You have set up a certain number of theories that you want to believe, and you have tried so hard to make yourself believe them that you have succeeded at last. I tell you, sir, that not one of your doctrines, however true it may have been in the beginning, will serve as a dam against the flood of changes that time brings."

Major Tyler was astounded at this rough reply, and he confided to me later his belief that Mr. Armstrong was not a gentleman. "The man is lacking in breeding and also those instincts which indicate good blood," he said, "and I refuse, sir, to argue important political and social questions with one so far beneath me." Having assumed this attitude, which gave him great consolation, he was able to tolerate the minister, and affairs again assumed their tranquil progress under the roof of Madam Arlington. The major's detachment consisted of only six soldiers, who were quartered about the place, my grandmother in her intense loyalty to the Southern cause receiving them willingly. The major, although he gave various grand reasons, did not know why he was there. Varian, who was farther to the eastward, he said, was preparing a heavy blow at the Northern army, and he, Major Titus Tyler, was to have an important

share in it. I suspected, however, that the personal interests of Varian had something to do with the occupation of my grandmother's house, but I remained silent.

As I grew better Elinor's visits became fewer and briefer. I had not seen her for a week, when, at last, I was able to walk across the hall. The doctor came that day and said it would be his final visit.

"In a little time you will be as well as ever," he said, "and be able to run as fast as any other Yankee from our troops."

The major added that he would allow me the liberty of the house, but I must not attempt to go farther.

"If you should try to escape I shall be under the dreadful necessity of ordering one of my men to shoot you, Henry," he said; "and, God bless my soul, what a catastrophe that would be!"

I looked from the hall door at the fresh greenness of the earth and sunshine of the skies, and thought what a misfortune it was to be shut a long time within doors. As I turned away I met Elinor, and I seized her hand eagerly.

"You have come once more!" I said. "I was afraid that I would not see you again."

But she drew her hand away shyly, and replied:

"I wish to speak to Madam Arlington."

She ran to my grandmother's apartment, leaving me there, and on the afternoon of the same day Varian arrived. I was in my own room when he entered—a splendid figure in a fine Southern uniform, unstained by use, his sword at his side.

"Believe me when I say that I am glad to see you again, Mr. Kingsford, and to see you well," he said, extending his hand, which I took. "I hope that my representative, Major Tyler, has not made affairs difficult for you here. It would be a rough jest, in truth, if a man were straitened in his own house."



I assured him that I had received only kindness from Major Tyler, who was an old friend of mine.

"I knew that he was such, and for that reason I sent him here," said Varian.

He spoke then of the war and its progress, enlarging upon the Southern successes in the East, and predicting brilliant victories for his cause in the West; he called my attention to his prophecies when we were together in Washington, but I saw that his mind was not upon those matters, that he used them merely as an approach to something else.

"I shall speak to you of a delicate subject, Mr. Kingsford," he said presently, "and I do it with the more freedom because I believe that you have known the lady since childhood and are a friend of the family."

"I doubt whether I am the right man to receive your confidences," I replied, foreseeing well what he would say.

"In brief, I am thinking of getting married despite the war," he continued, seeming not to notice my words, "and the lady is Miss Maynard, as you perhaps have guessed. I am fortunate enough to be received with great favour by her aunt and guardian, Mrs. Maynard, and that, I believe, would be decisive in most countries. Doubtless it will have its weight here, especially as I am with hope that my addresses are not unwelcome to Miss Maynard herself. It may be that after the war I shall take her to Paris or London. She would adorn the finest court in Europe."

He spoke with an appearance of great fervour, and seemed to take no note of my countenance, as if he were a young man confiding his hopes to his best friend. I am glad that I was able to remain impassive, and I took a sudden resolution to match his own assurance.

"I am sorry that I can not wish you success, Colonel Varian," I replied; "but I intend to marry Miss Maynard myself, if I can."



"You are frank," he said, frowning.

"Not more so than you."

"Then you mean that it shall be a contest between us."

"You have long known that it is so."

He was silent a while, and then he added:

"If it is to be a contest, as it certainly will be, you must admit that you are at a great disadvantage. You are here the prisoner of your rival."

"It is true, but one does not have to live long to know that Fortune has many faces, and she sometimes turns one and then another to a man."

"I see that I shall have an enemy who is worth conquering."

He said no more, and after paying his respects to my grandmother, left for his headquarters. Madam Arlington liked him. His manners, she said, indicated that he was a great soldier. Major Tyler came to me the next morning in much grief.

"I must leave you, Henry," he said, "and we were getting along so peacefully too. You gave me no trouble at all, and this is a campaign to my liking. But I must go South on other service. A man named Blanchard is to succeed me in the command here, and I have recommended you to him as a model prisoner."

The major left a few hours later, much to his regret and ours. Madam Arlington bade him adieu with real sorrow.

"If my hopes for the South have wavered at any time you have restored them, Major Tyler," she said.

"I shall come again, madam," he replied; "and I trust that it shall be with glory. I bore my part in the Mexican war, and I hope to do as well in this greater struggle."

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE TIME TO ACT

BLANCHARD arrived in the evening, and the easy days at our house were over. He was a captain now, and he bade me gruffly to keep to my room. "We want no spies on our movements," he said. My grandmother came to me a little later in a great state of indignation, and said that he had taken the best room in the house, bearing himself as if he were master.

"So he is, I'm afraid," I replied. "You see, grandmother, we have improved upon the old story. We get King Stork where we had King Log, before we even make a complaint."

Blanchard also increased the stringency of the guard, acting as if I were a prisoner of great importance. He roughly refused to answer questions, and when I threatened to complain to higher officers of his insolence, he replied with a grin, "Send your complaint to Colonel Varian." I counselled my grandmother to use forbearance, but she attacked Blanchard within my hearing, telling him that his conduct was infamous, and in striking contrast to that of his predecessor, that true Southern gentleman, Major Titus Tyler. Blanchard smiled, showing that he relished it. I felt like striking the man, but such an act in my position would have been madness. He stationed, on the second day, a sentinel with a rifle at the door of my room and said that I was never to go outside unless at his order. My

grandmother was in a rage, but he replied only with his provoking smile.

"You wish to be as troublesome as possible, Mr. Blanchard," I said.

"Captain Blanchard, if you please."

"I repeat, Mr. Blanchard, that you are uselessly troublesome."

"If it pleases you to think so, you are welcome," he replied.

"I suppose that all this is by the orders of Colonel Varian," I continued.

"You can suppose whatever you wish," he responded in surly fashion.

I was able to keep my temper perfectly, and, looking him squarely in the eyes, I asked:

"Mr. Blanchard, an assassin fired several shots at me from ambush when I was here, before the battle of Shiloh. What do you know about it?"

He flushed, and then replied quite composedly:

"The name of the man who fired them is Palmore. He is well and I've no doubt will thank you for the inquiry about his health. He shall be here to-morrow."

He was an old enemy, one of our county scamps, whom some testimony of mine had once helped to send to jail, and to whom the war with its destruction of law brought opportunity. I saw readily that he had become the willing tool of Blanchard, eager to use his chance to do me harm. He was a tall fellow, with heavy shoulders, a bullet head, and a red, ugly face.

I found this man in the morning on watch at my door in place of the sentinel who had been there the day before. His expression was a mixture of hatred and triumph.

"So, Mr. Palmore," I said, "you tried to shoot me?"

"I did, but my shots were cursedly poor."

He seemed to feel no sense of shame for his guilt, and I said nothing more to him. My imprisonment soon grew fearfully irksome. I was allowed to go outside at intervals only, and then under armed guard. Elinor did not come again, and the meagre news that we could obtain of her was alarming. It was William Penn who brought it. He said that she was restricted to the house by Mrs. Maynard, and that Varian, who now bore himself as master of the place, was often there. A girl could not be constrained of her liberty in peace times, but those were not peace times.

"The woman means to make her marry Colonel Varian," said my grandmother, "and I am astonished that Ellen Maynard has shown such good taste. Colonel Varian is handsome, brilliant, and distinguished."

Yet my grandmother was devoted to my cause, and nothing served me better with her than the opposition of Mrs. Maynard.

"You shall have news of the girl," she said, "even if William Penn has to get shot in finding it."

William Penn obtained the news and he did not get shot. He brought me my meals regularly, and took advantage of this to report to me two days later that he had been to the Maynard house and had talked with a servant. Elinor was not allowed to leave her room, her aunt saying that it was for her own good. Varian and not less than twenty soldiers were there, and he heard among them that Colonel Varian was to marry Miss Maynard very soon.

I could have struck my fist against the wall in my anger and impotence. A girl could not be forced into a marriage in a free country at this time, but she might be compelled to choose it. There are many ways to drive a girl against her will, as everybody knows. I walked to the door and the scoundrel Palmore stood on guard, rifle in hand.

"Don't try to come out, Mr. Kingsford," he said,

reading the look on my face, "or I shall have to shoot you."

"And you would be glad of the chance," I said.

His face was distorted into a hideous grin.

I went back slamming the door after me and gave myself up to painful thoughts. Never, thought I, was a man in a more unpleasant position. A prisoner at such a time!

There was a knock upon my door an hour later, and Varian entered, cool, polite, and smiling. The sight of him and his confidence sent the blood in a hot torrent through my veins, but I was silent, waiting for him to speak first.

"I am sorry," he said, "that I have not been able to come to see you sooner, Mr. Kingsford. We are enemies since you chose to have it so, but I see no reason why hostility should produce discourtesy."

"Not at all," I replied; "and as an evidence of it I ask you how your suit is progressing?"

"Very well, indeed. I speak sincerely. You know that the marriage of Miss Maynard and myself is to occur next week. Your servant, Mr. Johnson, was at Mrs. Maynard's seeking information, and as I saw no reason why he should not obtain it I gave orders that he have facilities. As you see, I am thoroughly informed, Mr. Kingsford."

"There is one question that I would like to ask you," I said, "if I may be permitted."

"Certainly."

"Have you yet obtained the consent of Miss Maynard to this marriage?"

I saw a faint colour come into his face for the first time, but in a moment he was impassive again.

"I think it is well to be frank," he replied, "and I say to you that I have not; yet I do not doubt that I shall. I warned you that this was an unequal contest, that all the advantages were on my side. I do

not know of any pursuit in which a close prisoner can show great activity."

"I expected at least that you would fight openly," I replied.

"Have I not done so?"

"Not when your man Palmore attempted to assassinate me before the battle of Shiloh."

"Mr. Kingsford, I have wished to speak to you of that, but I waited for you to introduce the subject. I had nothing to do with the affair. I did not know of it until long since, and then by chance, from Blanchard. It was Blanchard's fault, perhaps. The man is rough in his ways, but he is attached to me. I was of some service to him once on the other side, and perhaps he has been indiscreet in his zeal to repay me. He met this man, learned of his hostility to you, and—well, the two misinterpreted my wishes. Even if I were such a wretch, I do not need the help of assassins in any affairs of mine."

He spoke proudly, and drew up his figure as if he would defy criticism. I believed that he was speaking the truth, but I asked:

"Why do you keep Palmore in your service, and, above all, why do you have him on watch at my door?"

He hesitated a little and then replied:

"You still wish perfect frankness from me, and I own that my motives are a little mixed. Perhaps I can put it this way: he would not dare to murder you here, but as you are his pet enemy he is a most excellent guard over you. I have no legal right to interfere with him because of his attempt upon your life. He is doing his duty at present as a soldier, and we need ask no more. I tell you in confidence that I detest him as much as you can. Is my explanation satisfactory?"

"It will serve," I replied. "But, since I should be equally frank, I say that I would not do as you are doing."



“Put it down to the difference in men,” he said, “and in such a case who is to decide which is right? I am sorry, as I have told you before, that we are forced to be rivals and enemies, Mr. Kingsford. You have qualities that are to be admired.”

I thanked him, and he added that the rigours of my imprisonment would be relaxed. Moreover, I should be treated with courtesy by all his men. Just before he left he returned to the subject of Elinor.

“I assure you, Mr. Kingsford,” he said, “that Miss Maynard will be my wife within a week, and she shall be a happy wife. I am sorry, I repeat, that we are rivals in this particular, but it is a commonplace saying now that women shall ever divide men. When I first saw her in Washington I determined that she should become mine, and usually I have my way. I have known many women, but none before who has touched me so deeply, perhaps none who has touched me at all. Is it not true that those who love slowly love deepest?”

I had much to think of when he departed. Again I was furious at my fate because I was a prisoner when I needed most to be free, and Varian, with his smiling and confident manner, appeared the most formidable of all enemies. In truth, Elinor was in his power, and perhaps she would not long regard him as one to be feared. His confidence in himself might not be misplaced, and it is the bold who win the hearts of women. Varian certainly had an abundant share of boldness, and one who would oppose him must bring the same qualities into use. I conceived in that moment a daring plan, too daring it appeared after a little reflection, but I believed that it was an inspiration and I clung to it. I began immediately to arrange in my mind the details. Yet I was forced to delay action owing to the lack of opportunities, and I burned with angry impatience.

Madam Arlington took dinner with me the next day,



much pleased with Varian's order that I should be treated with more consideration. I, too, felt the benefits of this relaxation, as I could now go about the house almost as I pleased, and Palmore's leering face was not visible so often. But the news that my grandmother brought me was far from cheering.

"The marriage of Elinor and Varian is sure to occur next week," she said. "William Penn hears that Elinor is yielding."

"I do not believe it! I do not believe that Elinor is so weak!" I exclaimed.

"Henry," she replied calmly, "you know nothing at all about women."

Although I remained silent I was alarmed to the utmost, and I grew more impatient than ever to attempt my plan. Yet I could not believe, upon reflection, that Elinor would consent to this marriage. No words of love had passed between us, but she had ridden once in the dark to save my life. When I was wounded and delirious she had been the tenderest of nurses at my bedside. She had spoken of Varian with fear, and I did not believe that the eyes which looked with such truth into mine could become false. Some other woman might change, but not the Elinor Maynard whom I knew.

William Penn came to me the next day.

"I could not get any news of Miss Elinor," he said, in great grief, "except that she is still locked up in Mrs. Maynard's house. They said they didn't want me hanging about there any more, and if I came again I'd be arrested and sent off to a prison in the South, and you know, Henry, there is no better Southern man than I am."

I consoled William Penn with the assurance that they would not seize a loyal Southerner like himself, and then I confided to him my plan, which depended in great part upon his assistance.

"I would not dare, Henry!" he cried. "You know I'm not a fighting man, and I think your scheme is wild. It's bound to fail, anyhow."

"It will succeed if you stand by me, William Penn, and I shall rely upon you," I replied with confidence.

He protested no more and left much dejected. As I looked through my window presently I saw him riding away and I knew that I did not trust him in vain. Yet I became nervous and excited. Everything depended upon so many happy chances that I was afraid of a weak link in the chain. The minutes doubled and tripled in length. Noon was long in coming and I had no appetite for dinner; but I forced myself to eat, knowing that I would need all my strength. The afternoon dragged even more heavily. I looked through the window and saw only sunshine and peace. Two of the soldiers were on the front lawn lounging in the shade of the beech trees. The sun grew warmer. It was one of those long, hot summer afternoons in the South. The flies droned against the window panes, and one of the soldiers under the beech trees fell asleep. It was a day that invited rest, and I was glad. Few could be suspicious and alert under such an ardent sun and in such a peaceful world. My grandmother walked presently across the lawn, a straight, reliant figure. The forest formed a black line at the edge of the horizon, and a dim haze of heat hung between.

I began to feel some of the languor of the day despite my nervous excitement, but I did not leave the window, and an hour before sunset William Penn appeared, riding down the road that led to the village. He raised his hand twice, thus making the signal agreed between us, and I knew that he had been successful. It was a good beginning, and my heart leaped up with encouragement. I walked to the door of my room, and I did not know whether to be glad or sorry when I found that the man on guard was Palmore.

"So you are to watch over me this evening?" I said.

"Yes," he replied, with some return of his old insolent manner. "I am to see that the bird keeps in its cage."

"Mr. Palmore," I said, "I am not able to understand the importance which seems to be assigned to me. Why should such a guard be kept over an ordinary prisoner?"

"You will have to talk to Colonel Varian about that," he replied.

I returned to my window and watched with infinite gladness the coming of the night. I looked toward the west, and just as the sun was about to sink behind a hill William Penn appeared, his figure showing black and sharp against its crimson glow. He again raised his hand twice, giving the signal once more, and I knew that the second step in our plan had been taken.

My grandmother brought me my supper with her own hands. I was glad of it, because I meditated a long journey, and if I took it I was not likely to see her again for many days. She was strangely silent, and seemed to be more depressed than usual, she, as I have said, being a woman of such vigorous temperament that sadness could not endure long in her mind. I would have told her of my intentions, but when she had been present only a few minutes Blanchard himself came in and began to talk to me. Thereupon Madam Arlington, who disliked him extremely, walked out without a word.

"I don't think that we shall keep you here much longer, Mr. Kingsford," said Blanchard, with an appearance of joviality. "We'll send you South to join the other Yankee prisoners as soon as we get a chance. Colonel Varian would attend to it himself, but he's so busy getting ready for his marriage—and isn't she handsome too!—that he'll have more agreeable duties to attend to, and I'm afraid I must take you myself."

I was tempted to deliver a blow with all my might in the centre of his smirking face, but I refrained and instead drank the last of my coffee.

"Let Colonel Varian attend to his affairs as he thinks best," I replied, with an assumption of indifference.

"Oh, he will! Don't you fear!"

He saw that he could not provoke me into any passionate outburst, and presently left me alone in the room. I went anew to the window which had served me so well and saw to my great delight that the night would be dark. Two sentinels paced back and forth on the lawn, and I knew that a third, Palmore, was in the hall at my door. Varian, certainly, was taking good care of his prisoner, and I wondered what his superiors would say when they learned that he was using the soldiers of the Confederacy in his personal cause.

I waited an hour longer, and again I noticed with pleasure the increasing darkness. Then I hurriedly took a sheet from my bed, twisted it into a rope, and softly opened the window. Neither of the sentinels on the lawn turned to see, and I was thankful now that I had seemed listless in my prison, making no effort to escape, and, so far as my immediate guards could note, willing to remain a prisoner there in my own home, where I could find the comforts of life. Then I pressed hard upon the leg which had been broken. It gave back no twinge, and I knew that it was as strong as ever.

The two sentinels met on their beats and exchanged gossip. Then they went on, one lighting a pipe and smoking contentedly as he walked. I pulled the bed across the floor to the window, and then paused in fear lest the soft sliding noise should draw the attention of Palmore. But he had not noticed, and tying my clumsy rope to the leg of the bed I swung myself out of the window, taking all the chances of a shot from

either or both of the sentinels, should they see me. Never before did I feel such gratitude for a dark night. My room was on the second floor, and when I slid down to the end of the sheet I was within three or four feet of the ground. I hung there for a few moments, a black figure against the black wall; but I knew that the sheet showed in a strip of white above my head. I saw the two sentinels dimly as they walked to and fro, one of them smoking. A spark in his pipe blazed up and went out. He stumbled on a root, uttered a curse, and went on. I thought what a splendid target I would make if they saw me there against the wall; but they did not see me and I dropped to the ground. The soft turf felt pleasant under my feet, and the air of freedom was like the breath of hope. It filled me with courage.

The house cast a protecting shadow which increased the darkness, and I lingered there a little as I selected my line of escape. The eyes of the soldiers had grown accustomed to the night and I knew that my risk was great. I crept in the shadow of the house to the corner, and there I paused when I heard the sentinel who was smoking swear again. His pipe had gone out and he stopped to relight it. The other man joined him and they talked for a few moments. I waited, expecting them to go on, when I would continue my flight. The fence of the garden was only about fifteen feet away. I would make a silent dash for it, and then escape under its protection.

The two sentinels lingered, and presently one of them looked up at my window. He beheld the white sheet hanging down and knew instantly that his prisoner was escaping. He uttered a shout and ran toward the house. Had I retained complete presence of mind I would have remained where I was, my figure blotted out against the blackness of the wall, but, obeying the first impulse, I dashed across the lawn and sprang over

the garden fence, fleeing for my life for the second time from the home of my childhood. The other sentinel saw me first and fired at me with his rifle. The bullet whizzed over my shoulder, and as my feet touched the ground on the far side of the fence a second came from a different direction. My flight had brought me within sight of the sentinels on the far side of the house, and they, too, opened fire.

My grandmother's extreme fondness for pease had always been a joke with me, but now I thanked God for it. More than a dozen rows of pea vines, trained on sticks almost to the height of a man's head, ran the full length of the garden, and I dashed down one of the aisles, completely hidden for the time from my pursuers and those disturbing rifle shots. It is dangerous enough to be under fire in battle, but to be the sole target of a half dozen men, good marksmen too, seeking your life, and hunting you as they would a fox, is far more trying.

I dropped down momentarily between the pea rows, hoping to profit by the confusion that my disappearance would cause among my enemies, and as I stooped there I saw lights appearing in the house and heard much shouting. But the voices were those of the soldiers only. I neither saw nor heard anything of my grandmother, and I was much surprised, knowing how vigorous she would be on such an occasion.

There was a sound of tremendous swearing, and both Blanchard and Palmore dashed from the house. I peeped through the pea vines and saw the soldiers who had fired the last shots running about like hounds that had lost the scent, mystified by my sudden disappearance. I ran, still stooping between the rows, until I reached the far end of the garden, and then paused again. Before me was another open space about twenty feet across, beyond that a fence again, and the forest about a hundred yards farther.

"Which way did he go?" I heard Blanchard shout.



"Into the garden and then we lost sight of him," a sentinel replied.

"He's among these pea vines!" cried Blanchard. "Now, Palmore, is your chance!"

I knew the sinister meaning of his hint, and Palmore comprehended it too, as he sprang over the fence the next instant, and then crashed among the vines. I was wholly unarmed, and he doubtless knew it or he would not have come so fast. I saw him, pistol in hand, rushing down between the rows, and I ran for the fence. I crossed the brief open space before I was seen, but as I put my hand upon the fence and cleared it at one leap three or four bullets whistled around me. Then I ran for my life toward the woods. Halfway across I glanced back and saw that Palmore was resting his pistol upon the fence and drawing a dead aim upon me. It was an easy shot for a Kentuckian, but even as I looked a rifle was fired from the wood, a sudden look of vague wonder appeared on Palmore's face, and he sank without a cry to the ground.

I paused no longer, but with a heart full of thankfulness ran to the shelter of the trees.



## CHAPTER XXII

### THE PRIZE OF DARING

"DID I kill him? O Henry, did I kill him?" cried William Penn, as he met me in the shadow of the woods. "And to think that a timid man, such as I am, a man opposed to all violence, should shoot a fellow-creature! Shall I ever get forgiveness?"

"Was it a crime, William Penn, to save my life from that scoundrel?" I asked, as we ran deeper into the forest. I saw that he was trembling violently, but he still held the smoking rifle, and certainly there had been no trembling of his hand when he pulled its trigger.

I had little fear now. It requires almost super-human skill to follow fugitives on a dark night through a deep forest, and William Penn's rifle shot was likely to make our enemies fear that they would run into an ambush. My surmise was right, as in five minutes all noise of pursuit died, and slackening our pace we walked side by side among the trees.

"How can I ever thank you, William Penn?" I asked.

"By never getting me into such another scrape," he replied.

"William Penn," I said, "if I call upon you to risk your life for me again you know that you will do it. If there were more cowards like you it would be a braver world."

He muttered something about the reckless heart and tongue of youth, and a wish not to have my grandmother's feelings hurt. Then he relapsed into silence, and we walked lightly through the wood until we came to the glade in which the horses were hitched.

"Wait a minute," he said.

He thrust his hand into some brush, drawing forth a pair of fine pistols and a plentiful supply of ammunition.

"Take them, Henry," he said, "you will need them, and at the same time you will rid me of them. Why were such dreadful things ever made?"

"William Penn," I exclaimed with warmth, "did ever a man have a friend like you?"

"I'm certain I never did," he rejoined, with a faint humorous inflection. "My friends get me into trouble, never out of it."

"I shall repay you some day," I said.

But I knew that he did not want repayment.

I was exultant over my escape, and since it had turned out happily I was not sorry now that they had seen me. The greater the confusion among my enemies the better it was for my plans.

"What time do you think it is, William Penn?"

"About ten o'clock."

"Then wait for me here; I shall return by two in the morning."

He looked at the dark and silent woods and shivered.

"Do I have to stay alone?" he asked.

I laughed, and left him. I stopped in the shadow of a great tree before I had gone far, and looked back. He was sitting on a stump, reloading his rifle.

My joy increased as I walked briskly through the forest. Success was the finest of comrades, and I was free again; free, too, to attempt whatever I wished. "Surely," I thought, "the good fortune which has attended me so far can not fail!"

Less than an hour brought me within sight of the house of Mrs. Maynard, standing, like my grandmother's, not far from the forest. Now my heart began to beat with a heightened emotion. I thought of Elinor persecuted and imprisoned, and the knowledge that I was about to risk my life to reach her sent the blood leaping through my veins. I never doubted that she loved me. She would not have saved my life, she would not have come to me when wounded, she would not now suffer oppression for my sake, if she did not care more for me than for any other man.

Two windows of the Maynard house were lighted. One of the lights marked Mrs. Maynard's room, and the other came from a chamber that had been set apart for guests in the old days. I was sure that Varian was there, rejoicing in his imagined security and triumph. I felt anger and then a fierce exultation, for I believed that he would yet be defeated.

Elinor's room was at the northeast corner of the building, and all that quarter was dark, but I did not wish it to be otherwise. I crept to the edge of the wood, and then followed a fence until I was within thirty yards of the house, when I stopped and looked for the sentinel, whom I knew Varian would not neglect to post. I saw him presently walking in front of the house, and, though I watched ten minutes, I saw no other. No hostile troops were within fifty miles, and a single sentinel was enough for even a prudent commander.

The man turned presently and walked toward the far end of the lawn, and then, stepping lightly, I ran to the house. When he came back I was standing behind a pillar of the piazza. Our Southern homes are always built with piazzas or porches, in which we sit in the warm weather, and now I was finding Mrs. Maynard's most convenient. I was thankful, too, that I knew this house so well. I waited there until the man turned and went back again on his beat, and then, standing

upon the banisters, I seized the low edge of the piazza roof and drew myself up.

This roof was almost flat, and the windows of the second floor opened upon it. Burglars were unknown with us, and I smiled to myself to think that I was the first who had ever come to the Maynard house. The lighted window of the guest chamber was at one end of the porch and my destination at the other; but, drawn by curiosity, I turned aside for a moment to the window in which the light shone. I knelt on the roof, and looked into the room.

Varian, in full military dress, was sitting at a table, writing. He raised his head presently, and I dropped mine below the edge of the window, but he was not looking in my direction, and again I watched him. Whatever he wrote, it was pleasing to him, because he smiled, and when he smiled he looked like a man whom one would wish to have as his friend. I wondered anew at his character, and I wondered, too, if I misjudged him.

The sentinel on the lawn coughed, and I pressed myself close to the wall, but he was too far away to see me, and for the greater part of his beat I was completely hidden by the projections of the house. I had little fear of him, especially as he seemed to be far from alert. Moreover, I did not believe that Blanchard would hurry to the Maynard home with the alarm of my escape. He would at least make the pretence of a search for me before facing the wrath of his master.

Varian resumed his writing, bending his head over the paper again, and, leaving him, I passed along the roof to the other end, stopping before the window that I knew was Elinor's. I did not forget then to be thankful once more for our Southern style of building houses.

I paused here, and realized for the first time the full gravity of my attempt. More depended upon her now than upon me, and would she be willing to go with me?

But, having come so far, it would be foolish to turn back. I tapped upon the window shutter three times quickly, and then, after a pause, a fourth time. When we played together as boy and girl we used to have signals for calling each other after the fashion of children, and this was one. I waited, and I thought I heard a movement within the room, but it was followed by several minutes of silence, and I grew anxious. I caught a glimpse of the sentinel, and he appeared to be unsuspecting. His eyes were not turned once in my direction. I feared the vigilance of Varian more than that of any other, but the bar of light from his window still fell upon the piazza roof.

I repeated the signal, and in a few moments the slight noise as of some one moving was resumed in the room. The sash was raised, and the voice of Elinor, trembling, but nevertheless brave and confident, whispered between the slats of the shutter:

“Is it you, Henry?”

I did not know until then, until I heard the joyful tone of her voice welcoming me, how much I loved her. I felt, even in that moment of danger, a deep glow of happiness.

“Yes, Elinor,” I said; “I have come for you.”

“I believed that you would,” she said. “I have been sitting here every night waiting for you.”

She opened the shutter softly, and for the first time since she had become a woman I kissed her. I put my arms around her, and she gave a little sigh of relief. I felt then that I was strong enough to protect her against all men.

“I have come for you,” I repeated.

“To go where?”

“I do not know; but to be my wife.”

“Then I do not care where we go.”

I kissed her again, and warm lips returned the kiss.

"We must go now," I said.

"I am ready," she replied.

I lifted her through the window. Then she stood upon the roof of the piazza. Her face was pale, but her eyes glowed with resolute fire as she stood beside me, slender and straight. She saw the beam of light on the far end of the piazza roof.

"It comes from the room of Varian," I said. "He is writing there."

"They could never have forced me to marry him," she said.

"I know they could not," I replied with confidence.

The sentinel, turning on his beat, walked back and came into view.

"Lean against the wall, sweetheart, until he passes," I said.

She pressed herself against the wall, but my arm was still around her waist. I could feel her trembling, and we waited there in the darkness until the sentinel went by.

"Neither of us should ever forget to be thankful that this night is dark," I whispered.

She made no answer, but leaned trustfully against me.

Then, holding her hand and steadying her, I led her to the edge of the piazza roof.

"Sit there a moment," I said, and I dropped lightly to the ground. Then I looked up at her, and she looked down at me.

"Come! It is the last step," I said, holding out my arms.

"Then should I not hesitate before taking it?" she asked, a faint smile flickering over her face.

"Are you afraid?" I asked.

"Do you promise to love and protect me all your life?"

"With all my heart and strength."

"Then stand fast; I am coming."

She sprang down, and I caught her in my arms.

"Ah, you robber!" she cried. I had taken toll before I put her on the ground.

"You are to be my wife in an hour," I replied, and I kissed her again.

Thus I stole my sweetheart from the house of her persecutors, and thus she left all the world to follow me. So, too, did I forget the great war and all else, to take her with me. It was love.

The sentinel was about to pass again, and I drew her behind the pillar of the piazza. The night was so still that we heard the soft crush of the man's footsteps on the turf.

"Are you afraid?" I asked.

"I am with you," she replied.

The sentinel passed again, unsuspecting as ever, and, two bent figures, we stole across the lawn and behind the fence, and then into the depths of the forest. I looked back only once as we ran, and I saw the light still shining from Varian's window.

"I have beaten you with all your power and all your smooth intrigues," I said exultingly, but not aloud.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE WIND AMONG THE TREES

WE stopped a moment or two in the forest that Elinor might rest.

“My poor aunt!” she said.

“She will forgive us in time.”

She did not reply, but she looked at me, her face pale and lovely, and then it was suffused with a blush as she said:

“Which way do we go now, Henry? Remember that I follow you.”

“You do not follow; you go with me,” I said. “A good friend of us both is waiting near, and it is well for us to hasten.”

Then I told her of the alarm at my escape, and the shots that had been fired at me.

“O Henry! they might have killed you!” she said, and I felt her hands upon my arm. Then I was not sorry that they had fired upon me.

It took us nearly two hours to walk through the forest to the glade where William Penn was waiting with the horses, and it is not a time that I can ever forget. I had triumphed over all dangers and obstacles, and the woman I loved and whom I had so nearly lost, walked beside me, her warm young hand in mine. The night was dark, but the forest was not lonely and we were not afraid.

“What is that?” she asked.

We stopped, and she stood a little closer to me.

"It is only the hooting of an owl."

"And that?"

"The whirring wings of a bird flying over our heads."

We walked on, and again she stopped.

"It is only the rising wind among the leaves," I said.

"I am not afraid while you are with me," she repeated.

The night grew darker as we advanced. We kept to the thickest of the forest, and looking up I saw that the light of the moon was fading, obscured by drifting clouds.

"You told me that some one was waiting for us?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied; "it is William Penn, that most faithful of souls."

I had said that we ought to hasten, and she had agreed with me, but we did not go so fast. The night was dark and the way rough, and Elinor needed help and protection.

"A gully!" I said. "Beware, or you will stumble into it," and my arm went around her to hold her back.

"Be careful," I continued a minute later, "or you will be torn on those bushes," and I drew her nearer to me that she might escape the danger.

"Do you think that they will follow us, Henry?"

"Undoubtedly they will try to do so when they discover that you are missing," I replied.

She shivered, and I said, "Fear not, sweetheart, I would die for you."

"What noise is that?" she exclaimed, "is it not Varian and his men pursuing us?"

"Listen, and keep close to me," I said, and with my arm yet around her waist I drew her into the darkest shadows.

"If it is they, we will stand here while they pass," I said.

But I knew from the first that it was only the wind among the trees.

"It was nothing, or rather fancy tricking us," I said presently. "I think that now we can go on again."

We walked ten minutes in silence. Her hand trembled now and then in mine, but her face, though pale, expressed dauntless courage. I could see that it was so, with eyes grown accustomed to the darkness, and then—her face was not far away.

A tremor shook her hand, and she stopped. "Do you not hear a noise, Henry?" she asked. "Perhaps it is they."

"Yes, I hear it," I said, bending my head that I might listen better, "and we will stop a little while lest we walk into their arms."

"Traitor, you are trying to forestall them."

"But listen, Elinor, the noise is continued and steady."

"As of armed men searching everywhere."

"It may be armed men searching the whole forest."

"O Henry, I am afraid!"

"Let me support you."

We listened a few minutes, and then I said in a tone of great relief:

"It is only the little waterfall. You remember where the brook runs over the rocks."

"Of course; now I know that sound could be made only by the steady rush of water."

But I had known it from the first.

We reached the brook and paused a moment on its brink. It flowed in a baby torrent, a sheet of silver over the pebbles, a riotous little stream, as happy in its solitude as we; three feet wide, six inches deep, and as confident as Niagara.

"Oh, I shall get wet if I cross!" said Elinor.

"You need run no such risk," I replied, and lifting her in my arms I carried her over the stream. I had no regret save that it was not wider.

"Who asked you to do that?" said Elinor.

"I did not need to be asked."

"You take advantage of every chance."

"If I had not I would not have won you."

She made no reply, and we continued our journey.

"Isn't William Penn near now?" she asked presently.

"I hope not."

"Why?"

"Because, if he were, the pleasantest journey that I have ever undertaken would be too near its end."

"But I thought you said we were to be married then?"

"So we are, but ought I not to have a little time for courtship? You know it has been too short."

She was silent again, and we walked slowly on in the darkness. The clouds increased, and I found it necessary to help Elinor more. But we were approaching the glade in which William Penn waited with the horses.

"Are you sure that he will be there?" she asked.

"As sure as I am that we shall arrive."

We beheld in another five minutes the rift in the trees that marked the glade.

"Yonder is the place," I said with a sigh.

We saw, as we approached, William Penn sitting on the stump and holding the three horses by the bridles, which he had gathered in one hand, while the rifle was clasped in the other. He sprang to his feet when he heard our approaching footsteps, and the rifle flew to his shoulder.

"It is only we, William Penn," I said; "you need not fire."

"And who are 'we'?" he demanded in a loud and threatening voice.

"Behold us!" I said, as we stepped into the faint moonlight of the little glade.

"I thought you would never come," he grumbled, letting the stock of his rifle fall to the ground; but he added, with an amazing touch of gallantry for him, "Miss Elinor, we need no moonlight since you have come."

"What a compliment, William Penn!" she said; "and I wish you to know how much I appreciate it."

But I felt that we should linger no longer, and, mounting the horses, we rode with speed to the village. I had triumphed in the great object, but I knew that Varian would pursue us unrelentingly. If drawn elsewhere by military duties, he could detach Blanchard and a band of his personal followers and send them after us. I appreciated the dangers that yet lay before us, but I believed that we could triumph over them all as we had triumphed over those past.

Elinor became silent and shy. She even rode nearer to William Penn than to me, and the old man yearned over her like a father.

"How good of you, William Penn," she said, after a while, "to help us so much, and at such great risks!"

"The young are always foolish," said William Penn; "but we old people love them, and work for them anyhow. Perhaps it's because they are such blind ducklings that we feel sorry for them."

Then he turned in his saddle and shook his fist at me.

"You scamp," he said, "I've been nearly dead with fright for the last twenty hours. I'm a man of peace, and if ever I lift a hand again to help anybody while this war is going on, may I be condemned for all eternity as a fool!"

But we rode steadily on, we three, and William Penn was not the least bold among us.

## CHAPTER XXIV

“WHITHER THOU GOEST, I WILL GO”

THE village of Silver Bow is three miles from my grandmother's house, and four miles from Mrs. Maynard's, the three forming a triangle. A majority of its small number of inhabitants were zealous supporters of secession and the Southern cause, but at the same time they were the friends of my grandmother and myself, and I had little fear that any of them would detain us. So, when we saw the houses, long after midnight, it was with no feeling of apprehension.

“They are waiting yonder,” said William Penn, pointing to the single building in which a light shone.

“That is where we are to be married,” I said to Elinor, “and in a half hour it will be done.”

I saw her, even in the dusk, smile, and blush, and tremble.

The house was that of a widow, Mrs. Hunter, a great friend of my grandmother's, and a fearless woman like Madam Arlington. She was indebted to us, moreover, in many ways, and I did not believe that she would fail to help us at a time when we needed help most. Nor did she.

We dismounted, William Penn took the horses, and I knocked on the door. The Rev. Elkanah Armstrong opened it, his lean, strong face showing like a cameo against the light.

“You have come at last, thank God!” he said;

“and you have brought her with you. I have had many fears for you both.”

We entered, and, closing the door, he bent down from his great height and kissed Elinor on the forehead.

“You are about to take a great step, daughter,” he said, “and to take it under unusual circumstances; but, with so many dangers threatening you, I think that it is wisest.”

I looked for Mrs. Hunter, in order that I might give Elinor to her a little while, but it was my grandmother who came instead. She went at once to Elinor, not noticing me, and took her in her arms and told her how much she loved her. There seemed to be a strange pity in my grandmother’s voice, and I saw tears in her eyes. Then she turned to me, and said:

“Did you think, Henry, that you could be married without my knowing it, or even without my being present?”

“Grandmother,” I said, “I was afraid, if I told you, that you might forbid it, or that it might bring trouble upon you. It was a desperate venture.”

“I knew that,” she replied; “but William Penn, who has the greatest faith in me, told me, and I have been waiting here many, many hours to give you both my blessing.”

I was glad that she came since it had turned out so well, and I told her how much joy it was to me that she could be present at my wedding.

“I know it,” she replied; “I was chiding you only because I love you.”

She showed sentiment so rarely that I looked up in surprise, and she kissed me on the forehead as of old.

“I have never realized until to-night, on the eve of your wedding, what a man you have become, Henry,” she said.

Then she took Elinor away, and William Penn came



in. He proudly showed the marriage license, issued by the county clerk, another friend of ours, and endorsed by himself as my best man, and voucher for my good conduct and ability to support a wife, according to our law.

"And I signed all that under oath," he said, shaking his head ruefully. "How shall I ever get forgiveness for it?"

"You won't need any, William Penn," I said, but he continued to shake his head.

It was a full hour before Madam Arlington and Mrs. Hunter returned with my bride, and then she stood before me smiling, and blushing, and trembling again, and looking at me with appealing eyes.

"It is my own," said my grandmother proudly; "I was married in it to your grandfather before he went to the battle of New Orleans. Did you think that Elinor should be cheated of her bridal robe? and, O Henry, isn't she beautiful?"

It was a dress of lustrous white satin, with a flowered hem, and puffed sleeves trimmed with several rows of filmy lace. There was a pink rose in her hair, and a chain of pearls encircled the whitest neck in the world. She blushed again when her eyes met the admiring look of mine, and I answered a fervent affirmative to my grandmother's question.

"I have saved it all these years," said Madam Arlington; "but I did not know that I was keeping it for the most beautiful bride that ever pleased these old eyes."

My grandmother, with all her sternness, was a soft-hearted woman. Nodding her head toward Elinor, she said:

"You are forgetting something, Henry."

So there, before them all, I kissed my bride. Then we were married, the Rev. Elkanah Armstrong conducting the service; my grandmother, Mrs. Hunter, and

William Penn being the witnesses. It was a solemn scene, the hour, the strangeness of the situation, and the earnest voice of the minister adding to its impressiveness. When it was over he bent down like a father and kissed Elinor on the cheek, saying:

"My daughter, this is the greatest event in the life of any one, above all in the life of a woman, and I wish you the happiness that I know you deserve."

"And now," said my grandmother to me, "you must go. The rage of a jealous and disappointed man is pursuing you, and your life is not safe."

"And you, grandmother?" I asked.

"Have you ever known a time, grandson, when I could not take care of myself?" she replied with great pride; "and you know, too, that everybody within twenty miles of this place is my friend. Do you think that they would let any harm happen to me?"

She spoke the truth, and my mind was easy upon that point. Varian himself could not allow her to be annoyed.

William Penn came suddenly into the room. I had not noticed until then that he had slipped out directly after my marriage.

"You must go, and go now, Henry," he cried, "or you'll spend your honeymoon under a double guard. They haven't missed Miss Elinor yet, at least the news hasn't come here, but soldiers are already in the town hunting for you."

I turned to tell Elinor good-bye, but she, too, had gone quietly from the room. Well, I would say farewell after I had made my preparations. They were brief: a little food in a knapsack, a fresh supply of ammunition from William Penn, and some directions about the road from the same unfailing source.

"And now," I said, "I wish to tell Elinor good-bye."

She reappeared, as if my words had summoned her. The bridal dress was replaced by another of dark cloth,

and a riding cloak was over her arm. Her eyes met mine, and she smiled and then blushed at my look of surprise.

"Did you think that you could run away from me so soon?" she said. "I am going with you."

"But, Elinor——"

"A wife should cleave to her husband through troubles and dangers."

I wished to take her with me but I was afraid. Then my grandmother, ever a woman of decision and clear mind, spoke up.

"She is right," she said. "They will pursue and slay you if they can, and then Elinor is more completely in their hands than before. If you escape, you must escape together."

The two women bade each other a long farewell, and I saw tears in my grandmother's eyes as I had seen them there when I first came to her.

"Remember, grandson," she said, "that you now have in your keeping two lives that are dear to me."

"We shall both come back to you safe and happy," I said.

We mounted the horses, now well rested, and turned their faces toward the east. But I was troubled about William Penn.

"William Penn," I said, "if you think it unsafe for you here you might go with us."

"Never fear," he replied. "Nobody knows my part, and what would I do away from the place where I've lived all my life?"

A dozen people, most of whom knew us, had gathered by the roadside and were watching us with curiosity, but none offered either advice or interference.

We said another good-bye, this time the last, and then we rode toward the northeast, and into the darkness.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FLIGHT ACROSS THE HILLS

WE did not speak for some time. The moon came out and cast a faint, silvery glow. Elinor's face was pale, but her eyes were bright and brave.

"Are you afraid?" I asked.

"No," she replied with a little laugh. "Have you not promised to guard me?"

The course that I chose was simple. I intended first that we should reach a town about forty miles to the eastward, and after a rest there we would continue in the same way. The eastern part of our State is a mass of mountains, wild and lonely at all times, but far more so in 1862 than now, and the greater part of the scanty population was devoted to the Union cause. Travelling among them—and it would not require long to reach the wilderness—we would be safe. I intended, after crossing the mountains, to take my wife to her uncle, Paul Warner, in Washington, and then I would offer myself for service in the Eastern army. I could not do less, since, having volunteered, I now belonged to the Government. The plan seemed easy and safe were it not for the anger and tenacity of Varian, who I believed would not scruple to use for his private purposes the forces intrusted to his care by the South. I told Elinor briefly that I would take her to Washington, and asked if she approved.

"I think it best," she said.

Then we rode on in silence again. It was a warm summer night. The threatening clouds were gone and only little patches of harmless white floated in the sky. It was peace once more, and my flight from my grandmother's house and my escape from the bullets seemed far away. The road led among the hills and through the forests. The branches of the trees, ghostly in the dusky light, waved at us, but they made no threat. The houses were far between. A dog barked at us once, but we rode on unheeding.

"It is like an elopement," I said.

"It is one, is it not?" replied Elinor, with a happy little laugh.

"And you never cared for Varian?" I asked.

"No," she said. "He attracted me at first with his splendour, but when he drew nearer I feared him. When he sought to marry me whether I would or not, I hated him."

We relapsed into silence again, and after a while I saw a slender bar of gray light on the eastern edge of the world.

"The day is coming," I said; "but the night has not been unhappy, Elinor."

The smile and the blush pursued each other over her face again, and then she answered:

"But think of your responsibilities, Henry."

"My chief responsibility now," I said, "is to get something for you to eat."

I had food in the knapsack, but intending, too, that she should rest and sleep, I looked eagerly for a farmhouse. The full day was flooding the earth, and the hills swam in the rosy light. I saw presently a thin column of blue smoke outlined against the clear sky, and we rode toward it.

"We shall rest there," I said to Elinor.

"Do you think it safe?" she asked.

"We have come at least thirty miles, and we can not afford to break down our horses."

She said nothing more, but gave me a glance of implicit trust. Now, in the morning light, she looked tired, although she held herself as bravely as ever, and I knew that rest was needed.

It was but a plain farmhouse, and they were plain people who met us when I shouted at the door, a middle-aged man and his middle-aged wife, who looked at us with intense curiosity but asked no questions, a forbearance for which I was grateful.

"We have ridden all night," I said, "and the lady is faint. Will you give her food and rest?"

It was the woman who answered, and she did not speak in words, but she took Elinor in her arms and half carried her into the house. Then they gave us such as they had, and after that the woman took Elinor away.

"She must sleep," she said when she returned alone. "Do you ride far?"

"Yes," I replied, "and for life."

The woman made no reply at the moment, resuming her household work. But she turned to me presently as I sat by the window, and said:

"I do not know who you are, nor she, and these are bad times, but tell me that you are doing no wrong."

"We were married last night," I replied, "and I am taking my wife to her own uncle. Those who threaten us have no claim."

She said no more, but went into Elinor's room and came back presently with word that she was sleeping. "Poor child!" she said, "what a bridal morning!"

I went out to help the farmer look after the horses, which needed rest as badly as we, and to watch for pursuit. The man was like his wife, sparing in words but good of deed.

"These are fine horses," he said.

"Yes," I replied, with grateful recollections of William Penn, "they were chosen by one who knew." Then I asked him the distance to the town at which I intended to make our first stop, and he answered that it was twenty miles.

"But the road is rough," he said. "The hills get steeper the farther you go."

I did not answer. I was looking back in the direction from which we had ridden, seeking traces of pursuing horsemen.

"It's twenty miles by the straight road," resumed the man; "but there is a path a few miles longer, which one who does not want to be overtaken might follow, even if he got there a little later."

I thanked him for his friendly hint, and offered him money—I had with me a plentiful supply of both gold and bank notes—but he would take nothing, nor would his wife. "We do this for the girl's pretty face," she said.

Then Elinor came forth, glowing with restored health and strength, and we rode on, the kindly couple watching us until we passed out of sight.

"It is a good world after all, is it not?" said Elinor with a happy smile; "and there are good people in it, are there not, Henry?"

"Yes," I replied, "when one comes to them with a face like yours."

"For shame, sir, to make such an absurd compliment to your own wife!"

We followed the path as the man had described it to me, and it led among the lonely and higher hills. We passed few houses, and they were only cabins set in the little coves. The summer was fading, and the edges of the leaves had begun to turn dry and curl up. The air was pure and crisp with the early breath of autumn, and we heard the light wind singing among the leaves. We saw the white and dusty road once or twice below us,



curving around the base of hills, but unyielding to temptation we remained in the higher and more difficult path.

We were two hours on the way, when Elinor put her hand upon my arm and pointed to the valley below us.

"Blanchard and his men," she said.

I was devoutly thankful now for the farmer's advice, and also for the trees that sheltered our path. Blanchard and about twenty troopers were riding on the road parallel with us. We saw them distinctly through the leaves.

"They obtained the direction from some one in the village," I said, as I stopped the horses, "and they think to overtake us. We shall let them pass."

We watched them until the road made another curve around a hill, and the last we saw was the flash of steel from a soldier's rifle barrel. We had escaped them easily; but since they would ride to Hungerford, the town to which we had intended to go, the pursuit had become a grave matter. Varian was not with the troopers, but I had recognised Blanchard at their head, and I knew that he was not a man who would abandon the pursuit quickly.

"What shall we do?" asked Elinor, thinking the same thought.

"We must turn toward the South," I answered, and I named another town which I believed that we could reach before night. She uttered no word of fear or complaint, and we rode on the new course, arriving at our destination a little earlier than I had expected. I gave Elinor again into the charge of a hospitable farmer's wife, and we continued early the next morning toward the east, finding ourselves now on the first slopes of the mountains and in country which could be truly called doubtful ground, ridden over by the armed partisans of both North and South; by bands that claimed to belong to either, according to their convenience, and

who robbed according to their pleasure. Yet we saw no enemy, and I began to believe that we had eluded Blanchard, although I knew that even in such a thinly settled region news travels fast and we could not hope to pass unnoticed.

It turned warmer again, and the country was strangely lonely. Below us lay a little valley, but it was still and dead; the heat hung over it in a fine yellow haze; there was no ripple of a breeze in the grass. A shallow brook crept bravely over its brown sands. Far up the valley was a house, but it seemed desolate. We began to feel as if we were exiles. Great armies were marching; the fate of a nation was impending, and only we two rode between earth and sky. Whatever was happening was happening without us, and yet we were content.

We rode into the valley and across it, not meeting any human being nor hearing the sound of one. It was just the same drowsy summer afternoon, with the waves of heat rolling up from the south, and the rays of the western sun striking with dazzling brightness on hill and level.

We crossed the valley and again were in the rolling country, but gazing beyond into another and farther valley on the way we could see neither soldier nor civilian; only the hills and the forests. When I looked back I noticed that the brightness of the sun was dimmed in the east; a faint gray mist was creeping through the golden glow, and the trees on the crest of the hills were blurred; the day was closing, and now I saw no farmhouse to shelter Elinor. I produced cold food, and then dismounting, that our tired horses might rest, we ate our little supper and watched the night come in the east.

The forest, at the horizon's edge, grew misty and indistinct, then faded, a golden glow hung over the tree-tops for a few moments and fled, the hills sank away,

and the valley became invisible; all the east was gone, and the twilight passed on over the circle of the heavens into the mist, where the sun yet lingered, a shield of red fire. The long rays of intense light fell like lances across hill, valley, and plain, shone there a while and then were gone; the sun slid down behind the highest hill, a cloud of red and gold, the colours rising above each like terraces, marking for a little where it had sunk, then the luminous cloud yielded to the shadows, and the world was clothed in darkness.

We expected coolness to come with the night, but the air swam in a heavy, damp heat, that relaxed the muscles and dimmed the brightness of the mind. In this prison of thick, vaporous air, energy seemed to be going, and we felt a sense of depression.

The heat increased; the clouds were rolling like waves across the sky. From the southwest behind the hills came a hum, and I knew that a storm would soon be upon us. I took the army coat of rubber which the provident William Penn had tied to my saddle, and wrapped it around Elinor.

The hum in the southwest turned to a mutter, then grew to a roar, the lightning flamed in flash after flash across the sky like the swift strokes of a gigantic sword-blade, the thunder boomed in long, rolling crashes, and then rushing and roaring the rain came, sweeping in blinding sheets through the forests, and over the hills and valleys, and flowing in little rivers of mud and water in every path and road.

The dry earth for a time received the rain into itself and was glad; the cracks and seams, made by the heat, filled up; the thirsty grass, refreshed, raised its head, the dry foliage lost its brown, and blossomed anew in freshest green. The hot earth steamed at first with the vapours that rose, but presently the air began to turn cool, and the whole earth soaked in the steady pour.

We stopped under the thick boughs of a tree and sought protection from the rain, but I soon saw that the effort was useless; it beat through the leaves and upon us, and, knowing nothing else to do, we rode slowly, on hoping that it would soon cease, its mission to cool and moisten the thirsty earth finished. But it did not cease; the clouds still rolled across the sky, and no light showed there save when the lightning flamed through; the thunder crashed in irregular volleys, and the rain swept on, sheet after sheet, in unceasing repetition.

It was a summer storm of lightning, thunder, and rain, a peculiar product of our American weather, but none the less violent and uncomfortable because of its peculiarity. The wants of the thirsty earth had been satisfied long since, but it pounded on, the water sweeping in torrents down the hillsides, and the wind whistling and moaning among the trees.

In the darkness, which was deep save when lit up by the lightning, we wandered from the road and could not find it again. We had trusted to our horses, but their spirit was gone, and lowering their heads they waited for us to guide. The wet bushes and the slender boughs of the trees swished across our faces and tore our clothes. Our horses' feet sank deep in the soft earth, and they stumbled with our weight; we let the reins go, leaving it to their instinct to wander to the safest path. The lightning which blazed so often in our faces only dazzled us, not showing the way, and the moment the flash was gone the darkness settled around us again, thick, close, and impervious; the thunder crashed, and then the echo rolled far among the hills like the rumble of marching artillery; the boughs cracked before the wind and fell, and in the darkness we heard the sweep of new torrents, and the thud of the soft earth falling from the hillsides into the valley below. But we struggled on, and Elinor, turning a cheerful face to me, smiled, and said we must expect some hardships.

The lightning stopped by-and-bye, dying away in a few faint jets; the thunder rumbled among the hills for the last time and was gone; the wind no longer moaned and shrieked, and the snapping of the boughs, which had sounded like volleys of pistol shots, ceased, but the rain poured down in a steady, even flow, as if it would end only with the night. I was glad that the lightning had gone, but this monotonous and unbroken beat of the water was sombre and promised no rest.

We rode on for hours, hearing nothing but the steady drumming of the rain, the occasional sticky sigh of the yielding earth as it slid away from the hill and fell into the valley below. The thick vapours began to rise again from the steaming earth, but the clouds parted after awhile, and a pale glimmer of sky appeared, though the rain did not cease. The night light was too faint to disclose the way, and merely imparted a ghostly quality to the dripping forest and blur of hills that showed through; the boughs reached out long arms trying to hold us back, and here and there they were crossed in such queer shapes that the black lines made gigantic faces.

I do not know how long a time had passed when we heard the regular beat of horses' feet; at first it seemed to be ahead of us, then on one side, then on the other; but at last I decided that it was behind us, and approaching. Our horses had drifted into some kind of path, and we turned them back into the woods, not knowing who rode behind, nor, in truth, whether it was our fancy playing us some strange trick.

The muffled thud of footsteps in soft earth grew louder, and a ghostly legion rode by, a hundred or more in single file, in the faded gray of the Southern army, their caps drawn low and little streams of water running down their faces, their heads bent over, every man silent, and riding as if he were without life and tied to his horse; the horses themselves drooped heavy heads,



and the reins hung on their saddle-horns. All was sombre and silent; no gleam of metal or colour lighted up the procession, and thus it passed silently by; out of the mists and vapours it came, and into the mists and vapours it went.

Day dawned, and the brisk sunshine soon made us dry and warm, and after a little more of the cold food and water, and a stop to rest our weary horses, we resumed our journey.

I was glad to note by the sun that we still rode to the northeast, and thus had kept the true direction. We would go on. We must meet some one soon who could tell us where we were, and as I formed the resolution we saw from the hill upon which we stood a troop of mounted men appear in the valley below.

They were far off, but the dazzling light shone full upon the horsemen, and my heart leaped within me when I recognised the blue uniforms of the North, the welcome colour for which I had been straining my eyes so long. Surely we could find shelter in the Northern lines. They rode in a long column, heads erect, their faces to the wind and the north, not like the drooping and sombre procession that we had seen the night before.

The notes of a trumpet, mellow, inspiring, and clear, came up from the valley and echoed through the woods and hills, where it died in a soft and liquid note. The horsemen stopped and formed in a line across the meadow. We wondered what this meant, but looking up the valley, we saw another troop of horsemen emerge from a wood, and they were in gray, not in blue. Our own progress would have to await the issue of a battle.

The valley lay before us like a board, and the men moved upon it in perfect unison, their figures decreased a little by the distance, but their features almost visible in the faultless sunlight. Again the trumpet notes, mellow, cheerful, and echoing, came up to us; but this

time it was the Southern trumpet that sounded. The two lines of horsemen moved toward each other.

We dismounted, and while I held the bridles of both horses we walked to the edge of the hill, intent upon the battle that was about to unroll before us. Elinor's lips parted, her face pale and her eyes shining.

The speed of the approaching lines increased from a walk to a canter; little jets of flame burst from each, and the rattle of carbine and pistol shots came to our waiting ears. It was a sputtering fire, now rising, now falling, then dying away, but beginning again in a moment. Little clouds of white smoke rose, but were soon left behind by the swift riders. Some horses, saddles empty, still kept their places, and galloped shoulder to shoulder with their comrades. It was a fine spectacle seen from afar, full of life, spirit, and movement, and the wounds were hid.

The strip of green between the approaching lines narrowed rapidly; they seemed about to melt into one. The pistol fire died like an echo, and was succeeded by silence. We were too far away for the tread of the horses to reach us, but this silence lasted only a moment. Two lines of sabres glittered in the air, and then the opposing horsemen hurled themselves upon each other. We heard the crash and the shouts, and saw the sabres as they rose and fell.

There was for a moment a confused and mingled mass of men and horses, and we hung over it breathless, until out of the tumult and turmoil one line of riders emerged in the semblance of order, leaving the other only a huddle. The men in blue still rode, and the men in gray were down.

The line of blue horsemen turned back, and the sabres rose again. The gray must choose between death and surrender.

But the notes of another trumpet came from the woods, and another body of horsemen, compact and



numerous, galloped toward the field of conflict. These, too, were in gray, and they outnumbered the little Northern band fivefold.

A shout of triumph burst from the second battalion in gray, and reached us as we stood upon our hill. The cavalry in blue stopped, fired a few scattering shots, and galloped down the valley, disappearing. The others did not pursue, but gathered around their defeated comrades, took up the dead, and then passed out of the valley at the other end, Southerners and Northerners disappearing in different directions. Thus died my hope of sheltering Elinor behind the Northern sabres.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### AT LAST CHANCE

“ I AM glad that we were no nearer,” said Elinor, and I knew that she was thinking not of herself, but of the men who were lying out there in the valley, and who would smile no more. War is a terrible thing for woman to look upon.

We reached a village at noon, where we found rest and food for ourselves and the horses. Many questions, natural to the dwellers in lonely places, were asked us here, but I told a part of the truth, saying that my wife and I were going to the East, and wished to pass as far away from the path of the war as possible. They advised us to beware of the roving bands of partisans who were committing many atrocities, and we continued on our way, soon arriving in the region that was distinctly mountainous. Here autumn was advancing on the uplands. The leaves were beginning to burn with vivid reds, and yellows, and browns, and the air was strong like wine.

Elinor, who had been grave and quiet during the early part of our journey, now became a sprite. Never had I seen her when the play of her fancy was more brilliant. I was the subject of many a jest, but never an unfeeling one. I think it was youth and happiness in her veins, her escape from the life and dangers that she dreaded, and the quiet world through which we now rode. The roses, which had paled a little in her cheeks

under the stress of danger and hardship, bloomed afresh and in more vivid colours. Never have I seen a finer spirit and a greater courage. She would not anticipate disaster, but expected only good fortune. She talked of those whom we had left behind, and those whom we expected to find in the East. She laughed at William Penn, and in the same breath thanked him. She spoke gently of my grandmother, and of her aunt, too, who she was sure would forgive her. She wondered where Major Titus Tyler was, and if we would see in the East Pembroke, and Tourville, and Mason, and all the others we had known.

I knew that my loyalty was due to the army, but I did not wish the happiest journey of my life to end soon, and so we made no haste for a while. There is but one true honeymoon in every man's or woman's life, and nothing can replace it. A country of thirty millions could not miss one humble soldier, and my conscience was at ease while I looked upon the woman who rode beside me, and felt that even in war life may be sweet.

The autumnal colours deepened. The mountains glowed with their varying colours, and a fine haze like that of Indian summer clothed the ridges. We saw far away the smoke of forest fires, and now and then the crack of a rifle shot came to our ears, but it was only a hunter, and we saw and heard no enemy. The war now seemed to us a vague and distant quarrel in which we were not concerned, and yet if we had sought more closely through the valleys and coves through which we were passing we could have found its trail. Both sides had drawn troops from among the lank mountain boys, but the North had been the greater gainer by far. They fired at each other sometimes from the mountain ambushes, but no one disturbed us.

We had been nearly two weeks on the way, riding through beautiful weather, and were deep in the moun-

tains, when we reached a tiny hamlet called Last Chance. There were not more than twenty houses in the place, and they were all of logs, but it was a picturesque little village, lying in an angle of a narrow valley with a clear mountain torrent rushing at its feet. I decided that we should rest here a day before crossing the highest and loneliest peaks, and, as usual, it was easy enough to find a place for Elinor. Her face and manner were an unfailing passport to the favour of the mountain wives, and an hour after we arrived she was comfortably installed in the best room in the best house in the place, while I found quarters fifty yards away, with the only shopkeeper in Last Chance. I sat in his queer little store, while Elinor was sleeping, and saw the mountain men, some still in the coonskin cap and buckskins of the pioneers, come in and bargain with their furs for what they thought they needed most, and that seemed to be powder and bullets.

I took my supper with Elinor and then walked back in the dark toward my own room. When I was half-way between I heard a clatter of hoofs, the gallop of cavalry, and in a moment thirty or forty men rode down the trail into the village. It was clear moonlight, and the leader raised a shout when he saw me. I knew him. It was Blanchard, who, I had thought, must have quit the pursuit long since.

My pulses seemed to stop beating for a moment, and I claim that it was not fear for myself. I can say truly that my first thought was of Elinor. As I hesitated a moment, uncertain what to do, Blanchard fired at me with his pistol, the bullet whizzing near my face. I drew my own weapon and sent a return shot, but missed Blanchard, and instead struck the man just behind him, who fell from his horse. Then the bullets began to patter around me, and, seeing the futility of flight or further resistance, I held up my hands as a sign that I surrendered.

"It was a long chase, but we brought down the game at last," said Blanchard as they bound my arms; "and I'll wager that the girl can't be far away."

His face for almost the first time since I knew him showed expression. His satisfaction was undisguised.

"She's near, isn't she, hey, Mr. Kingsford?" he said; "or were you getting ready to run off with some other girl? I fear that gay fellows like you are fickle."

"My arms are bound, Mr. Blanchard," I replied, "and so it is safe for you to say whatever you please."

He said nothing more, but then I heard the quick step of light feet, the flutter of a dress, and Elinor's arms were about my neck.

"Yes, Elinor," I said, "it is Blanchard, and they have taken us. It was my carelessness, but I thought that they had turned back long ago."

"What right have you to bind him?" asked Elinor, turning indignantly upon Blanchard. "He is a prisoner of war."

"He is too slippery, Miss Maynard," replied Blanchard; "and he is especially wanted."

"They can not harm you; they can only take you back," said Elinor bravely, and then she said to Blanchard, with a flash of warlike fire in her eyes, "I shall not permit you to harm him; he is my husband."

"How can you prove that?" asked Blanchard, his face distorting into an ugly grin.

I struggled to break the cords that bound my arms, but they held fast. Oh, for only five minutes of freedom! I saw now why he called her Miss Maynard, and yet the motive seemed too base. Elinor flushed a deep crimson, and then became white. But she turned her back upon Blanchard with an expression of scorn.

"I wish you not to speak to me again," she said.

"As you please," he replied coolly; "but meantime we'll guard you too, my lady, as you are wanted as well as he."

The villagers gathered, but they could not have rescued us from a troop of cavalry even had they felt disposed to do so. Their looks showed sympathy. Blanchard noticed it, and he said:

"He is a deserter, and, besides, he stole a young girl from her home."

"Both are lies," I said. "I was a prisoner, but I escaped, and the lady is my wife."

I saw that they believed me, and I felt a pleasure in it. I wished to be justified even in the minds of those humble mountain people who had never seen me before, and who probably would never see me again.

Blanchard proceeded with the authority of a dictator, and was as unscrupulous. He told Elinor that she could return to her room, but a guard would be placed around the house. She kissed me on the forehead, after the fashion of my grandmother, and said:

"You shall escape yet, Henry, and wherever you go I will go with you."

Blanchard sneered, but said nothing. I, too, was returned to my room, but my arms remained bound, and a sentinel, rifle in hand, stood inside the door.

"I shall not take any chances with you, my pretty fellow," said Blanchard. "I warned the colonel, back there at Silver Bow, that you might escape, but he was too confident. The greatest men even have their weak moments."

Blanchard's language and accent were good, and I looked at him with curiosity, wondering why he should be willing to do Varian's ugly work for him. But his face was inscrutable, and in a moment he left me alone with the sentinel.

A tallow candle burned on a table, and I sat down on the edge of the bed, my bound arms paining me somewhat. I was not sleepy, and tried to engage the sentinel in conversation, but he refused to answer. Time then passed with the greatest monotony and slowness, but in



an hour Blanchard came back and said that he wished to talk with me.

"I decline to say a word, no matter what the subject," I replied, "unless you unbind me. I can't escape anyhow, guarded as I am."

"I think that's true," he replied, "and while I am here I have no fear that you will try it."

He ordered my arms unbound, and told the sentinel to stand outside the door, but to be ready with his weapon if he were called. Then he sat down by the table in the only chair that the room contained, while I remained sitting on the edge of the bed. The light of the candle flickered over his face, and I noticed how heavy, strong, and unscrupulous it was.

"Mr. Kingsford," said Blanchard, "I am not going to take you and Miss Maynard back to Kentucky."

"Mrs. Kingsford, if you please," I replied, "or I refuse to listen to another word."

"Very well, then," he replied, "Mrs. Kingsford let it be, for the sake of courtesy. Nobody shall say that I lack manners. You would not think, would you, to find such pride in a rough man like me? And I repeat that I am not going to take Mr. and Mrs. Kingsford back to Kentucky."

"Why not?" I asked with interest.

"Because Colonel Varian, my friend and employer, has preceded you to the East. This escape of yours, and your kidnapping the young lady for whom he intended the high honour of being his wife, upset all his plans. It was altogether likely that your flight would take you to the eastward, and he learned, too, from good evidence, that it had done so. Then he used his influence, which you and I know to be powerful, to have himself transferred to a command in the East, in order that he might have the pleasure of meeting you and the young lady when you arrived there. Don't you feel flattered because your own movements compel so many



others to go in the same direction? Meanwhile I took a select body of troopers and followed on your trail through the mountains, which was not a hard thing to do, as I heard of you several times before I succeeded in catching you in this little town so aptly named Last Chance, for here you saw your last chance go. Colonel Varian wanted to do this work himself, but it was not wise for him to come, and, besides, he knew that he had a competent and faithful lieutenant, Covin Blanchard, Esquire, at your service”

“All this may be interesting,” I said, “but you have now told the tale.”

“These are merely preliminaries,” he resumed; “but I have a message for you from Colonel Varian. You know that he is a man accustomed to having his own way, and he had his heart set upon this girl. I repeat that even the greatest men have their weaknesses. He was in a terrible rage when he heard that you had escaped; but that was nothing to his fury when he found that you had stolen his bride and taken her with you. The thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, and some of us were afraid that we were going to get struck by a thunderbolt. Even I, Covin Blanchard, who claim to fear nobody, had a pretty bad half hour, and I redeem my credit only by the recapture of you and Miss May—Mrs. Kingsford, I mean.”

It was my impulse again to strike him, as his intent was too obvious, but I restrained myself, and he resumed:

“Colonel Varian is not a man to be discouraged, and he at once set about the pursuit of you two, still determined that the young lady should be his, and not yours. Mrs. Arlington and that confounded minister said that you and the girl were married, but those hasty ceremonies are sometimes imperfect, and Colonel Varian would not let such a trifle stand in his way. Keep your anger! I am merely giving you the view that the

colonel takes of it, and I have to do it to make you understand the situation. His orders to me were to bring you and the girl to him in Virginia, and under no circumstances to permit your escape again. My men were to shoot you at your first attempt, and any little movement, you know, may look like an attempt."

Both accent and words were full of sinister meaning, and I understood thoroughly.

"Now it's superfluous for me to say, Mr. Kingsford, that you are in the way," he resumed. "You are very much in the way. Colonel Varian was disposed to like you, and so am I even now. You are a brave man and full of resources. You escaped and stole away with the girl very cleverly. Neither of us denies that, and Colonel Varian is disposed to favour you so long as you don't oppose him. Now, I want to make you a proposition in his behalf. I don't say that it comes from him. I merely foresee his wishes. I am under heavy obligations to him, and sometimes I serve him in ways of which perhaps he doesn't approve. There is a difference between us: he is scrupulous, and I am not, and on that account we make a strong team. It was I who incited Palmore to shoot at you—I make no secret of it now, why should I?—but what a wretched blunderer he was! We are well rid of him. But, in brief, what I want to say to you is this: Give up your claim on the girl, let Varian have her, and when you make an attempt at escape at some convenient place in a day or two, my men will fire wildly; their bullets will go over your head, and our hurry in reaching Virginia will forbid further pursuit of you."

I felt the hot blood rising again in my veins, and my brain was touched with fire.

"But the lady is my wife," I said, with an appearance of calmness.

"That useless ceremony again," he continued impatiently. "Whatever it amounts to, it can be undone

without trouble. As I said, it does not defeat Varian. Be reasonable—you need to be so. Even if she were your wife, as you say, she can easily become your widow, and then you will be much worse off than you are now, while she will be no better. Don't you see how completely both of you are in our power? Why not give her up, when you can only gain by it? Besides, if you let Varian have her you can say that you were first——”

I struck him in the face with all my might, and he fell bleeding to the floor.

“Repeat such words,” I said, “and I shall strangle you, even if your sentinel out there shoots me the next moment!”

“You should be thankful that I have not called him already,” he replied, giving me a look of deep malice as he struggled to his feet. “I prefer, however, to do my work in the right manner. I have better command of myself than you have over yourself. I see that you are not a man of sense, as I had supposed. I was making you a fair proposition that might have saved your life, and you replied with violence. Good night.”

But he did not go immediately. He wiped the blood off his face, and then recalled the sentinel, who rebound my arms at the gun-muzzle.

“Now you watch here, Walker, until your relief comes,” said Blanchard; “and if the prisoner tries to escape, shoot him at once. Don't forget this.”

I knew from the sentinel's face that he would not forget it. Blanchard went out quietly, and I was left to unhappy thoughts.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### PRISONERS OF VARIAN

WE resumed the eastward journey the next morning, but under conditions so different. Our happy ride was over. I sat upon the same horse, but I was bound to him, and a trooper was on either side of me, almost shoulder to shoulder. Elinor rode just ahead. They treated her with the utmost respect; in truth I had not feared otherwise, but Blanchard refused to listen to her request that I be unbound.

"Perhaps, as you claim, lady, he can not escape," he replied; "but he did so once, and he may try it again. He'll have to stand it the best he can."

But she showed in this crisis the nobility and courage of her nature. She did not droop or entreat. She was brave and cheerful, and whenever they permitted she rode near me, speaking of the time when we would be free again and happy together. Had I been disposed to be downcast, my very pride would not have permitted me to be sustained only by the strength of the one who would have been called the weaker of the two.

"You are only a prisoner, Henry," she said, "and they have no right to treat you so. The Southern authorities would not permit it if they knew of it, and when we reach the East I shall tell them, if I have to go to General Lee himself, who is the most humane of men."

I had little in my treatment to complain of save

the binding of my arms and the inconvenience that it caused. They gave me a fair share of their fare, and at night I had as good shelter as the others. Nor was there any diminution in the respect that they paid Elinor. I hoped sometimes for a rescue, but the chances decreased fast as we began to descend the eastern slopes of the mountains and enter the lowlands. Villagers and farmers came to look at us now and then as we passed, but they said nothing. Blanchard met no force sufficient to cope with his, although almost the whole of the region through which we rode was hostile to the South. We were fired at once from a mountain ridge by some of those pleasant gentlemen known as bushwhackers, but none of the bullets touched us, and they did not dare to come nearer. Elinor showed no fear when the rifles cracked and the bullets whizzed about our ears, and Blanchard spoke his admiration.

"Both Colonel Varian and you show good taste," he said.

I did not reply.

We descended into the Valley of Virginia, a region devoted to the Southern cause, and now occupied, at least in the portion we entered, by Southern troops. Blanchard came to me on the second day after we reached the low country, and said:

"We shall overtake Colonel Varian to-morrow, and I shall give the lady and you to him. Both of you, doubtless, will be glad to part with me, but not more so than I am to part with you. I do not care for commissions of this kind, because I have been afraid that you would escape again."

I bowed assent, but I was surprised and disappointed to hear that Varian was so near. I had believed that we would be taken to Richmond, where I was confident that I could secure at once the release of Elinor, and my own too, or, at least, a recognition of my status as a mere prisoner of war. The Southern leaders would

not tolerate for a moment such treatment as we were now receiving. But I should have known better, knowing Varian's boldness so well. Nevertheless I did not permit my face to show my feelings to Blanchard.

"I should like to speak to my wife," I said.

He considered a moment, but at last consented, and then Elinor was at my side. I told her that we were approaching the camp of Varian, and would not go to Richmond as we had hoped. It was likely that we should be separated there, and the future would not be pleasant for either of us, at least for a while; many things not true would be said to her, but she need fear nobody.

"I shall never forget, Henry," she said, "that I am your wife."

She looked into my eyes with so much courage and truth that my fears for her diminished. Neither her aunt, nor Varian, nor circumstances could quench her spirit. I felt a deep sense of pride because I held the love of such a woman, and I wondered how I had ever won it.

She feared only for me, not for herself, and I swore under my breath that I would rescue her yet from the hands into which she had fallen.

We reached Varian's camp the next day. He and some of his officers were occupying a large double brick house on a hill, and the tents of the men stood on the lawn. The detachment seemed to number about five hundred, all cavalry. As we approached, Elinor said, "Good-bye for a time."

Then she went away, and I saw a woman come forward to meet her. It was her aunt, and, however hostile and revengeful Mrs. Maynard might be, I was glad that she was there, since Elinor would not now be the only woman in the camp.

"I am sorry, Mr. Kingsford," said Blanchard, "that we can't give you quarters in the house, but this is



not a hotel, and you will have to put up with the barn."

They imprisoned me in a small room that had been used in better times for the storage of shelled corn. The place was comfortable enough in autumn weather, and I had no complaints to make. I had been there several hours, given up to lonely thought, when the sentinel at the door presented arms and admitted Varian.

He was dressed as a brigadier general in the Southern service; his uniform was of the richest and freshest texture, and a magnificent gold-hilted sword hung by his side. This weapon, as he afterward told me himself, was presented to him by the ladies of Nashville and Clarksville for heroic conduct in the presence of overwhelming numbers of the enemy. His manner was dignified, and not expressive of triumph.

"Your quarters here are not luxurious, Mr. Kingsford, but we give you the best that we have," he said.

"Has a man a right to ask more?" I replied.

"You are perhaps surprised to see me in Virginia before you," he resumed; "but as I came by a more direct route, and in great haste, I have been here several days awaiting you and the woman for whom we are rivals. I never doubted Blanchard's success in finding and recapturing you. I have in him a most loyal and able friend. He has told me of a proposition that he made to you, and the reply that you made to him. He is a man of blunt speech, and perhaps has not that delicacy of mind which we think natural to a gentleman. He went further than I would have had him go. Yet I regret to tell you, Mr. Kingsford, that your position is an exceedingly doubtful one, and we scarcely know what to do with you."

"Why so?" I asked.

"You escaped from us, and instead of returning to your army you stole a young woman from her nearest



relative and natural guardian, and ran away with her into the mountains. If we returned you to your own forces would not they treat you as a deserter?"

I laughed, amused that he should seek to frighten me with such a story.

"Mr. Varian," I said—I did not yet call him general, although I saw by his uniform that he had been promoted to that rank—"I do not fear any such result as the one at which you seem to hint, and why should you fear for me?"

"Then we will dismiss that phase of the question," he said; "but as you, a soldier, were taken in civilian's attire, it might be held that you are a spy, if I chose to press the charge against you; and then your kidnapping of Miss Maynard can not be passed over even in a time of war."

"You should know," I replied, "that Miss Maynard was not kidnapped. She came with me of her own will."

His eyes flashed with anger and the blood surged to his face. I had touched him in a tender spot, and for a moment he showed it, but he recovered himself quickly, and again was cool and unimpassioned.

"It is not well to boast of one's triumphs with a lady," he said.

"Ask my wife if she did not come willingly," I replied.

"Listen to me, Mr. Kingsford," he continued. "There is a rivalry between us which must have a decisive issue. We have long known it; we knew it in Washington before the war, although it was then vague, but it is now acute. You have been triumphant so far with Miss Maynard. It is an old truth that no one can ever account for a lady's choice. I do not say that as any criticism of you, but rather in defense of myself—but I think that fortune is changing. The cards are now in my hands, and to be frank with you, Mr. Kings-

ford, I shall use them. I have been accustomed to my own way all my life; it is now a habit with me, and the strongest motive in a man's life is the love of a woman. I mean that she shall yet be my wife. I had planned a great career for her by my side, and in order to win her, to be frank again, I am ready to compromise with my conscience, if it is necessary. I tell you that she shall yet be mine."

He spoke with the quiet resolution of a strong man, sure of success. But I was not afraid. I, too, was confident.

"You forget the greatest obstacle," I said.

"What is that?"

"The will of the lady. You forget that I have her love. As you say, no one can account for the choice of a woman, but I have it, and you can never win it from me, whether I be alive or dead."

The threatening flash, quick as lightning, appeared again in his eyes, and his face reddened to the brow.

"Let me remind you again, Mr. Kingsford," he said, "that it is not wise to boast of your triumph with a lady; but since you speak in such plain terms, so will I. If I can not win her with her consent, I shall win her without it, whether you be alive or dead."

I felt the full measure of his threat against both Elinor and myself.

"I am glad to see you as you are, Mr. Varian," I said, "and to find of what material you are really made beneath your false covering."

"I do not differ from other men," he replied, "although I may be less of a hypocrite than most of us. What is it that our sex has not done for the love of a woman? Have not the greatest in history thrown away all else for the smile of a round-cheeked girl? I think that Adam himself ate of the apple merely to please Eve, and not because he wanted it. Shall I hold myself superior to other men, and can you claim that you

possess an exclusive virtue in this respect? Women are fickle, and a week from now you who feel so confident may be planning as bad deeds as I."

He ceased abruptly and left the room, and during the next two days I saw only the guards and those who brought me food. But on the third day a fresh breeze blew into the room and brought with it Major Titus Tyler. He greeted me with effusiveness and evident joy.

"Henry Kingsford, and a prisoner again!" he exclaimed. "It seems to me that when the invincible Southern army has nothing else to do it occupies itself with letting you escape and recapturing you. Henry, my son, have you heard how gloriously things are going here in the east? Why didn't you show common sense and join our side? Didn't you know that we would win? Didn't I take the trouble to tell you so in Washington, just before the war began? You know how we beat McClellan in the Seven Days, drove him back with unparalleled slaughter. Stonewall Jackson, the greatest division commander that ever honoured the earth by riding over it, has now surpassed Napoleon's Italian campaigns. Pope and the Army of the Potomac have been caught between Lee and Jackson at Manassas, and ground to pieces. We are magnificent, invincible, and in three months I shall be mixing mint juleps for my friends on the steps of the Capitol in Washington."

I had heard of this bad news, but the Manassas defeat was new to me. Occupied as I was with the fortunes of Elinor and myself, it nevertheless filled me with the gloomiest thoughts of my country. Our generals, at least in the east, where it was most important, seemed unable to cope with those of the South; our fine armies were sacrificed when bravery availed nothing, and the cause of the Union was declining. My feelings must have been reflected in my face as the major clapped his hands on my shoulders, and cried:

“Don’t take it to heart so much, Henry; it had to be! Did you think that anybody could conquer the South?”

I asked him if he had seen Elinor, and he replied that he was talking to her not an hour since; indeed, he had seen her often in the last two days. Then he burst out with a flowery tribute to her.

“One of the noblest girls that I ever saw, Henry,” he said. “Did I say a girl? I meant a magnificent woman. By God, sir! a prisoner though you be, I think that you are to be envied. They brought her in as much a captive as you yourself are, and gave her into the care of her aunt. The old lady began with reproaches and stern looks; she was afraid that her niece had ruined herself forever; she had not believed it possible that a member of the Maynard family could have been guilty of such conduct; but the girl, blazing with wrath, stopped her right there. She said that she married you, and she was proud to be your wife; she had done nothing to be ashamed of, nothing that she would have undone, and that it was useless either to reproach or threaten her. If her aunt objected to her hasty marriage with you, Mrs. Maynard herself was chiefly to blame, because she tried to force her into a marriage with Varian. They say that she was magnificent in her anger, Henry, and would not allow a word against you. I repeat that you are a lucky fellow, prisoner that you are, but how it will all end I don’t know.”

My heart swelled with pride and gratitude, and, prisoner though I was, I agreed with Major Tyler that I was a lucky man.

“Tell me about Varian,” I said.

“He is as high and haughty as ever,” replied the major; “but silent and stern. It was a heavy blow that Elinor struck him. Oh, I know that he was wild with love of her, and is yet; but he is a great soldier; neither you nor anybody else can deny it. He has just

been made a brigadier general for distinguished and valuable services in the field, and besides that, you know the influence that he has abroad, and we want friends in Europe. He is my commander and your enemy, Henry; he could not be anything else, with that girl dividing you."

The major said that he could have only a half hour with me, but he talked all the time. How long they would stay at the present camp he did not know. Varian's was partially an independent command, and the confidence in him was so great that he could do as he chose within wide limits. Then the major passed from the particular to the general, speaking again with enthusiasm of the Southern successes in the East. He was sincere in his beliefs, and his confidence in the complete triumph of his cause was apparent. I did not dispute the point with him, knowing the vanity of such attempts, and when he went away I missed him sorely.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### ONE WOMAN'S WAY

A WEEK passed and I could learn nothing of Varian's intentions, although Major Tyler came to see me often, and the guards, who were friendly enough, talked freely. Blanchard was my immediate jailer, but he said little, merely asking me once if I had any complaint to make of bad treatment. Varian did not come again, nor did Elinor. The major told me that she had asked the privilege more than once, but it was refused. Her aunt was with her constantly and kept watch on all her movements.

A dark and rainy day came at last. I seemed to be unnoticed, and through the hole in the logs which served as the window of my apartment I saw much bustle in the camp. Major Tyler visited me in the course of the afternoon and chattered after his usual lively and inconsequential fashion. He had been talking to Varian that morning, he said, and the general spoke of moving the camp in a few days to a fortified and stronger place.

"Do you know," said the major, "he told me that he would be glad to make the change, and one of his reasons was his ability to keep a better guard there over you, as he is much afraid that you may escape from this place. He must think that you are a spy, Henry, and that they can get valuable information out of you in Richmond when they take you there, or he wouldn't



be so anxious to hold you. As for myself, I'd be glad to see you get away."

I thanked the major for his good wishes, and presently he left me. I was confirmed again, by his words, in my purpose to escape at all hazards, and I saw that the attempt must not be delayed. I might not secure an opportunity elsewhere.

I was left alone throughout the remainder of the afternoon. A guard brought my supper about dusk, and when I had eaten it I looked again through the hole between the logs. The wind was blowing, a fine rain was falling, and the night was dark. All the conditions were favourable, and I was thrilled by a feeling of exultation. I promised myself that if I escaped from Varian now—and I was sure that I would—I should take care not to fall into his hands again.

I waited one hour, two, three, and more, until all the noises died in the camp, and then I tried the lock. The key had been turned, but it was an ordinary plate lock, screwed on the inside of the door, and I was confident that a single kick of my boot delivered with all my might would knock it from its fastenings. But I preferred to wait at least an hour longer in order to make sure that all but the sentinels would be asleep, and I went back to my stool, where I sat waiting for the hour to pass.

And now a wonderful thing happened, which I must tell in the language of the chief actor, since no words of mine can describe the depths of a woman's devotion, nor her willingness to make any sacrifice for those whom she loves. I knew little of its import while this scene was passing, and suspected nothing of its nature. The truth is told in an old letter written to my grandmother, and sent by her to me, which now, yellow and worn by many readings rather than by time, lies before me. I read it again for the thousandth time:



"DEAREST GRANDMOTHER: You insist that I tell you the whole story of that terrible night, and, since you know a part, it is best now that you learn all. I had thought to keep it concealed forever, but I would rather you knew the truth than some wild distortion of it. Why I did it I do not know, but I think it was the result of a wild impulse and my fear for him. Indeed, after the idea came to me I did not have a chance to think. The time left was so short that I was in a fever. And then, dearest grandmother, you know that he was my husband, and I loved him with all my heart and soul, and I believe that if you had been in my place you would have done as I did.

"It was Major Tyler who told me of their foul and wicked plan. It was this old friend who did us a service that we can never repay. You know how he liked Henry, and still likes him, although they were on opposite sides in that terrible war. Varian and Blanchard misjudged him—it was Providence that made them commit the mistake—and about nightfall Blanchard said something before him that revealed to him all their plan and all their wickedness; he was far more acute than they thought, and he resolved that such a crime should not be done, if he could help it. He dared not ask leave to see Henry again, but as soon as he could get away from them he came to me. He wanted me to go at once to Varian and beg for Henry's life, and I promised that I would go, although I did not intend to say what the good major wished me to say, as I knew how vain and idle such words would be.

"I found Varian in the parlour of the house which he had made his office, writing despatches, and I told him that I desired to see Henry. He was my husband, I said, and I wished to talk with him alone for a little while. I asked it not as a privilege, but as my right; and I said that if I were treated with such continued cruelty I would appeal to President Davis himself. I

was not acting then, for as I spoke I thrilled with indignation against Varian and all his allies.

"He looked at me with one of the strangest looks that ever I saw on a man's face. 'When do you wish to see Mr. Kingsford,' he asked; 'to-morrow?' 'No,' I replied, 'to-night; now!' 'Very well,' he said, 'you can see him, since you insist upon it, and alone; but I fear that circumstances will make it the last time.' I shivered; I understood his meaning, though he knew it not, but his words and the hidden threat in them only urged me on. You know, dearest grandmother, that with women, when we do a thing it is not so much a question of bravery, as men understand the word bravery, as it is of nervous excitement. And I knew of no other way.

"General Varian went with me to the door, and asked me if I would not have an escort and a light to the barn where Henry was imprisoned, as it was dark and raining. There was a strange tone in his voice, an accent as of sympathy or pity—was it for Henry, or for me?—but I said No; I was not city bred, and I did not mind a little rain, nor did I fear the darkness. I was not in a mood, I added, for any company save that of my husband, whom I had not seen in many days. He bowed his assent—his manner was most gentle; I am not able, grandmother, to read the motives of men, they seem so strange to me—and then I walked toward the barn. I saw him still standing in the doorway, the lantern that he had offered me held motionless in his hand, and his eyes following me. But I shuddered to see him watching me so, and I was glad when the path led around the shrubbery on the lawn and hid me from him.

"The wind was blowing, and I could hear it moaning among the hills like a human voice; it dashed the rain in my face, but the cool, wet touch strengthened me, without taking from me any of the fever in my

veins that carried me on. I can forget no event of that terrible night. It was very dark; the barn itself was only a shapeless black mass in the darkness, but, knowing what they had prepared, my imagination gave me new eyes. I was sure that I saw Blanchard himself standing behind a rosebush, with his rifle in his hands. Henry had struck him down once for good cause, and Blanchard, who, I think, disliked everybody, unless Varian was an exception, hated most of all the man who gave him the blow.

"I was stopped near the barn by a sentinel with a lantern, but I showed him the order from Varian, and he went with me to the door, which he unlocked himself. While I was standing there, waiting to enter, I became weak from excitement and nervousness, but it was only momentary. I said to myself again that there was nothing else to do. I knew that Henry would attempt to escape that night, and the good major, prompted by Varian, and not dreaming in his innocence that he was used for such a purpose, had suggested it, and the night itself invited it. The lock on the door could be broken easily, and Henry would take flight by the way that seemed most obvious, the way that they wished him to take, across the unoccupied space east of the barn and toward the hills, which on that side were less than half a mile away. You may ask me why I would not tell Henry to stay, and not to make the attempt, but I knew that after such a failure they would not spare him. I could save him only for the moment by such advice, and I clung to the way that I had chosen. You who are a woman yourself know how tenacious of our purpose we can be, weak as we seem.

"The guard opened the door, and after he shut it behind me when I entered I heard his retreating footsteps on the turf. There was a dim candle burning on the table, and Henry was sitting on a stool in the corner. He sprang up with a cry of surprise and delight, and

the next moment I was clasped in his arms. How we women like to have some one stronger than ourselves to love and protect us!

“He asked me many questions: how I had been able to visit him, what was the news in the camp, what were my own plans, and I answered them all in the best way that I could. I know that my manner was excited and nervous, but he did not seem to notice it. Then he told me that he intended to escape that night; that he had tried the lock on the door, and he could break it; he was confident of escaping through the camp in the darkness and the rain, and while it was not likely that he could reach Northern territory, he was willing to surrender to some other Southern force, where he would not be the victim of a private revenge. He would secure an exchange, and then send for me; he knew that I would keep a brave heart, he said, and he would claim his wife, if he had to come to Richmond itself to get me.

“He asked me, too, if the sentinels outside seemed to be vigilant; and when I replied No, he said he would break from the barn within a half hour of my departure. Did I not think the opportunity was good? and I replied faintly, Yes. He said that he had already chosen his course; it was easy to do so, as it lay straight before him; he would run for the hills, which he could reach in a few minutes, and once there he would have no fear of recapture by Varian’s men.

“‘You must not go that way,’ I said, and I said it with such eagerness that he looked at me in surprise. ‘It is the most dangerous road,’ I continued with excited emphasis. ‘Some Northern skirmishers were seen on those hills to-day; they are supposed to be there even now, and Varian’s men are watching especially on that side for them.’ He seemed to be both pleased and convinced, and he replied: ‘It is good news that you tell me; if those sharpshooters would only

make an attack now, it would be much easier for me to escape while the firing is going on.' And that put a thought in my head. 'Oh, yes,' I said, 'it may occur at any moment, and if you hear it, break open the door and run. Be sure to go to the west, even if you have to dash among the soldiers' tents to follow that course. Now, I am only a woman, Henry, and not a military genius, but I know I am right, and promise me that you will do as I ask you.' I smiled at him, although I knew it was but the shadow of a smile. He put his arms around me and kissed me again, and said he would do just as I asked, and that I was the wisest and truest woman in the world. Then he took my hands in his, and looking into my eyes, said: 'I do not know how I ever won you, but I have won you, and that is enough.' Then I said that I must go. 'I want a promise, too,' he said, 'and it is that you keep inside the brick walls if there should be any firing.' I replied that I would do so, a promise for which I do not need to ask any forgiveness, and then I walked toward the door. But he stopped me and kissed me again. I was trembling all over, but he did not know why.

" 'For the last time,' he said.

" 'For the last time,' I repeated, but with another meaning.

" 'You are protected against the rain?' he asked.

" 'Yes,' I replied, 'see my coat! one could take me for a soldier.'

" I had wrapped a great army overcoat of rubber around me, and I drew the cape of it over my head after the fashion of a cavalryman in rainy weather. 'Could I not pass for a soldier?' I asked, walking across the room with quite a military swagger.

" 'Yes, if you were not so handsome,' he said—I merely give his own words; then he kissed me once more.

“ ‘This is really for the last time,’ he said.

“ ‘This is really for the last time,’ I repeated.

“I was upborne now by a great exaltation. The time for doubts had passed and the supreme moment was at hand. ‘Don’t forget,’ I repeated, ‘that if you hear the shots of the skirmishers the time for your flight has come.’ He replied that he was not in the slightest danger of forgetting such an important sound, and then I knocked on the door. The guard opened it, and when I stepped out, quickly closed it again behind me. He raised his lantern, looked at me, and then, laughing slightly, said:

“ ‘If you had been a little larger I would have taken you for a trooper. As it was, I had to look at you close, lady. I’ve heard tales about men slipping out of prison in their wives’ clothes and the guards all the time thinking they were women.’

“ ‘But you see that I am not Mr. Kingsford, do you not?’ I asked, echoing his laugh with one of my own.

“He offered to escort me back to the house, but I asked him if he would not let me carry the lantern. He demurred, but I insisted, giving various reasons at length, and flattering him too—you know that the American soldier is conquered easily only by a woman. When I appealed to his gallantry he handed me the lantern. I wanted to achieve time with all this talk, in order that Henry might think me back in the house before anything happened.

“We walked a few steps side by side, approaching the point where we would come into the view of the others, and then raising the lantern I dashed it into his face with all my might. I am not a weak woman, you know, and it was a cruel blow to one who had treated me kindly, but I was thinking of Henry just then. He uttered a loud, terrible cry, and fell stunned to the earth. I threw away the fragments



of the lantern and instantly ran across the open space on the eastern side of the house and toward the hills, drawing my rubber coat closely around me as I ran.

"I fear that I could never have the spirit and courage to be a soldier, even if I were a man, and I am truly thankful that I am not one. My feverish nervousness and excitement became in those awful moments sheer terror, and I think that I must have run as a woman never ran before. Some one fired at me from the shelter of a bush before I had taken a dozen steps. I think that it was Blanchard himself, eager as he would be for the first shot. The bullet passed by my face. I felt the rush of the wind and heard the awful whistling sound that it made, and in my fright I scarcely felt the earth beneath my feet as I ran. More shots were fired—I do not know how many, but they seemed innumerable to me—and the bullets whistled all around me. I wondered why I was not wounded or killed, but I did not feel any bullet strike me. Then I remembered that soldiers were often shot mortally in battle and were unconscious of it at the moment, and I ran with all the strength that I could summon in order that I might carry out the plan which I had undertaken.

"They continued to fire at me, and they raised, too, a shout that the prisoner was escaping. I saw many lights flashing, the lights of lanterns, and of exploding gunpowder. I knew that Henry was a man of decision and undaunted courage, and I believed him now to be out of the barn and escaping in the other direction, while all the soldiers ran after me, sure that I was the prisoner. The belief gave me courage and hope, nor did I feel any weakness coming from a wound. I was sure now that I had not been hit, and then suddenly the love of life flamed up in me. I do not know why all of them missed me. Perhaps it was the haste, the con-

fusion, and a darkness that exceeded the calculations of Blanchard and Varian.

“I was more than half-way to the hills, and I felt that I had passed the worst of that fearful gantlet. The hills were before me, a black and indistinct but welcome mass, and oh, how I longed to reach them! Henry himself would find me there and rescue me. They could have overtaken me if it had been daylight, but they became confused in the darkness, they mistook each other for me, and ceased to fire much, for fear of shooting their comrades.

“I ran into some bushes, and now I believed that I had escaped. They could scarcely find me in the woods and hills on such a dark night; but I had underrated the cunning of Blanchard and Varian. Upon some pretext or other they had placed two men in the bushes at the foot of the hill to shoot down Henry should he escape the rest; and when they heard me running, and the cries of the others that a prisoner was escaping, one of these men rose up before me. •

“He lifted his rifle and aimed directly at my head. I saw his finger on the trigger, and I stopped quite still, unable to move from terror. I should have been killed then, grandmother, but at the last moment I remembered. It was an American soldier before me, and suddenly I threw the rubber coat off my head, and stood there gazing at him. He was not ten feet from me, and as he was looking along the barrel of his rifle into my face he knew me for what I was, a woman. He uttered a cry of surprise and instantly dropped the barrel of his gun. ‘Was I about to kill a woman!’ he exclaimed in a tone of horror. I sprang aside and ran on among the bushes. I did not hear him following me.

“I reached the hills quickly now, but I continued to run as fast as I could, and soon I heard nothing save the sound of my own footsteps. But I went on,

for how long I know not, nor in what direction, but at last I heard a noise as of some one approaching. I was weak and staggering now, and I turned aside to escape. I ran almost against a man, and looking up, I saw with a joy I can never describe that it was Henry. Then I fell in his arms in a faint.

“ELINOR.”

## CHAPTER XXIX

### WITH FRIENDLY FOES

WHEN I heard the shots fired at Elinor, as she has told in her letter to Madam Arlington, although I never dreamed that she was the target, putting herself in the place intended for me that my life might be saved, I knew that the time for me to escape, if I would escape at all, had come. I had not expected the skirmishers so soon, but it was opportune, and I believed Elinor to be safe in the brick house.

I kicked the lock so hard that it flew from its fastenings and to the other side of the room. Then I ran out and I saw the flash of the firing toward the hills where Elinor had told me the Northern skirmishers lay. I heard, too, the crack of the rifles and shots of men. It was quite a lively skirmish, I said to myself, and the hotter the better for me. Varian's men would be too well occupied to pursue a single escaping prisoner.

I ran toward the west, dodging here and there among the tents, and in five minutes I was out of sight and hearing, having made my escape with an ease that astonished me.

I waited in the woods about an hour, and hearing and seeing nothing, I made a wide curve to the eastward, intending to find the Northern skirmishers if I could and join them; but I searched the woods, naturally without discovering any trace of men who did not exist. It was while I was seeking thus that I heard a

light footstep. I stepped behind a tree, and was soon able to tell by the sound that only a single person was approaching. I waited, hoping it to be one of the sharpshooters for whom I was looking, and my amazement was unbounded when I saw that it was Elinor. I ran forward to meet her, and she fell fainting in my arms, as she has told.

She soon revived, though for a long time she was weak and trembling. I shall not attempt to describe this reunion under such strange circumstances, nor what we said to each other, since there are words too sacred to be related to others, but I was surprised at the state bordering upon hysteria into which she seemed to have fallen. It was not thus that I had known Elinor; she had been always of the bravest; her spirit was akin to that of Madam Arlington, and usually she was firmest when the most danger threatened; but now she trembled, and clung to me as a frightened child clings to its father.

"I know it is very foolish and weak of me, Henry," she said; "but I was at the door of the house when the skirmishers began to fire, and it suddenly occurred to me then to escape too. Oh, you do not know how that man Varian frightens me!"

"It was a most happy thought," I said, "now that we have met, and I shall take care that neither of us falls into Varian's power again."

We walked slowly through the woods, she supported upon my arm until her strength came back presently. Then we talked a little about our future course. I still believed in the existence of the Northern skirmishers, Elinor not having told me better, but as I saw no sign of them I concluded that they had made a hasty flight from dangerous territory. I had no hope now of escaping to the Northern lines, as we were well within the region held by the South, and I wished to find some Southern officer, independent of Varian's command, to

whom I could surrender Elinor and myself. Elinor agreed with me that this plan was best, and, keeping it in mind, we walked on until daylight. The rain ceased, fortunately, before dawn, and when the sunlight came at last our clothing soon dried. I found a farmhouse, and knocking boldly at the door, requested food for a lady and myself. I was prepared for the surprise of its inmates, and explained at once that I was an escaped prisoner wishing to surrender to a Confederate commander. Then I asked if they could refer me to any Southern posts in the vicinity.

They received us with courtesy. We experienced in all our wanderings only sympathy and consideration from the country people whom we met, no matter what their position in regard to the war. A number of Confederate posts were in the neighbourhood, they told us, when we had eaten the food that they set before us. General Varian with a considerable detachment was eight or ten miles farther back; if we turned southward we would find, about ten miles distant, a second force under Colonel Burton; but if we continued straight ahead we would overtake a small body of Virginians under Captain Pembroke.

"Who?" I asked with eagerness.

"Captain Charles Pembroke," was the reply.

"Then we shall surrender to him," I said, and the look of relief on Elinor's face was answered, I know, by a similar look on mine. Pembroke was a native of the Valley of Virginia, and it was the best of fortune that he should be stationed so near his home. When we were ready to start, the farmer approached with a horse saddled and bridled.

"The lady looks faint and ill," he said, "and she shall ride. This is my wife's horse and saddle, and they are at her service."

I could not decline the offer, as Elinor, even after the rest and food, was scarcely strong enough to walk,



and I had, moreover, fear of pursuit. So I accepted it with thanks, meaning to see that he secured his horse again.

"You said straight to the eastward, did you not?" I asked.

"I'll guide you," he replied, and he walked on before. I knew Elinor's face was again the potent charm to secure us help when we needed it most. We reached Pembroke's post in an hour and a half, merely a village of tents in an open field, and the sentinels, in accordance with my request, notified their captain at once that a man and woman wished to surrender to him. Pembroke came out of his tent, the same smart, trim youngster that I had known in Washington, but now much browner, and I do not think I can ever forget the look of intense surprise upon his face when he saw us. I was inclined to laugh at his perplexity, despite our precarious position.

"Is it really you, Miss Maynard?" he asked.

"No, it is not Miss Maynard, but Mrs. Henry Kingsford, if you please," she replied brightly. "Permit me to introduce to you my husband, an old acquaintance of yours."

He stared at us in increasing surprise and perplexity. Then he laughed.

"It's as you say, of course, Mrs. Kingsford," he replied; "but you two certainly have the most original style of wedding trip that I've ever known."

Poor old Pembroke! I knew what he concealed under that laugh and jest. I added quickly that we surrendered to him, and our fate was in his hands.

"Then you are my guests for the present," he said. "Chance does not often send me such welcome friends, and I shall make the most of the opportunity. I shall abandon my tent at once to Mrs. Kingsford. As I am commander, I took the best, of course."

I told him that Elinor would most appreciate just

now, the companionship of her own sex, and was there any woman present?

"Only one," he replied, and he called in a loud voice, "Mary Ann!" "Mary Ann is the cook," he said. Mary Ann, a gigantic coloured woman, appeared, and with one cry of "Bless my soul, honey!" she took Elinor in her arms and carried her into the tent. I had no further fears for my wife, and I went with Pembroke. He led the way to another tent, where I freshened myself a little, and made some improvements in my toilet. Pembroke with great delicacy refrained from asking any questions, although I saw that he was burning with curiosity.

The morning was brisk, cool white frost appearing on the hillsides. The camp fires invited, and I said, indicating the nearest, "Shall we sit there?"

"Yes," he replied. "It is built of rails from my father's farm, and we are entitled at least to a part of its warmth."

He ordered camp stools, and then I related our whole story, as I knew it—for Elinor's part was yet hidden from me—omitting nothing, and telling him why I was so anxious that we escape from Varian's hands. He listened with the deepest interest and attention.

"I think you were wise in coming to see me," he said, when I concluded. "Varian is evidently wild over the loss of Elinor. Perhaps there are some who can understand his feelings. I have to hold you, of course, as a prisoner of war, but I shall despatch you at once to Richmond, where you can secure a speedy exchange, and where, at any rate, you will be out of Varian's power. I can send Elinor at the same time to my mother and sister in Richmond. The women folks of our family could not remain in this war-trodden region, and they have gone there to stay until better times come, as come they must."

There was a sad smile on his handsome face. I said again to myself, "Poor Pembroke!" and I trusted that he would recover in time from his own secret blow, although he had been from the first without hope. I knew, too, that I would never find a truer or more gallant friend, and already my faith in him had proved the fine metal of which he was made.

## CHAPTER XXX

### WITHIN OLD LIBBY'S WALLS

PEMBROKE sent us at once under escort to Richmond, and we arrived in the Southern capital, then flushed with great successes and greater hopes. The battle of Antietam, as bloody as Shiloh, and fought not long before our arrival, had proved a temporary check for the South, but the people of Richmond were disposed to make light of it. "McClellan's army outnumbered Lee's two or three to one," they would say, "and even then it was a draw. The North can never conquer us, though it borrows men from all the world."

We made the last stages of our journey to Richmond by rail, and it was twilight when we passed through the fortifications that surrounded the capital of the Confederacy. I looked with eager interest at this little city, to win which we had shed so much blood already—and in vain—but, being a prisoner and not a tourist, I saw little of it. I saw, however, two sweet-faced women, one middle-aged and the other young, come forward to meet Elinor, and I knew by the resemblance that they were the mother and sister of Pembroke. Elinor was permitted to say good-bye to me, and then I was taken to Libby Prison, where I found a numerous and goodly company. Yet I went with a willing mind, feeling at ease about Elinor, and rejoicing in my soul over the double defeat of Varian. I was in the prison a week without word from anybody, but at the end of

that time Mary Pembroke came with a message that Elinor was well and happy, and sent her dearest love, and bade me be of good cheer, as I had powerful friends who would see that I came to no harm.

"She could not get permission to enter the prison," said Miss Pembroke, "but I was allowed to come in her place because of the services of my family to the cause. Charles himself will be here next week, and we shall try to get you exchanged."

Miss Pembroke was a handsome, fair girl of twenty, bearing a marked resemblance to her brother. I discovered, too, in our quarter of an hour together, that she was of a romantic temperament, and Elinor's story appealed to her most strongly. My wife was installed already in the hearts of her mother and herself, and they intended to keep her in their home until the Southern armies entered Washington and dictated a peace.

"For you know we are going to do it," said Miss Pembroke, defiantly.

"If it was always the spirit of the Southern women that led the way you would," I replied.

This was not wholly a compliment or a jest, as everybody knows it was the Southern women who were the last to give up, and the men themselves were long enough about it. In truth, I do not know that many of the former have given up yet.

"Elinor herself hopes soon for permission to see you," said Miss Pembroke. "We live in Grace Street, not far from the White House of the Confederacy, and President Davis dined with us two days ago. Elinor did not wish to be present, but mother said she must, and she yielded. I loaned her one of my dresses, and it shows how self-sacrificing I am, Mr. Kingsford, as she so outshone me that I felt quite subdued and small. I don't think that Mr. Davis caught her name when she was introduced, as he said by and bye, 'I shall not let

it be known that we have such beauty in Richmond, as it may tempt some gallant young officers from the front, although I know that nothing else can.'

"'You may tell any one who feels inclined to come,' replied Elinor, pertly, 'that I have a husband at least six feet tall.' 'A husband,' said Mr. Davis, in great surprise; 'and pray where is he, madam?' 'In Libby Prison,' she replied. 'He is a Northern soldier.' Mr. Davis hum-hummed a half dozen times, and then he said, 'That's bad'; but his face brightened, and he added: 'No, it's good; you can convert him into a true Southerner; I should think, madam, you have only to ask'; and then he looked his admiration so plainly that Elinor blushed, but she was not angry, for I would have you to know that she is a woman just like the rest of us. They did not talk any more about you, Mr. Kingsford, but mother says that the most influential friend that you have is your own wife."

It was another week before I heard from any of my old friends, although I was making new ones within the walls of old Libby, Northern soldiers imprisoned there like myself. Then a guard told me that three Southern officers wished to see me, and I was taken forward under escort to meet them. They were Pembroke, De Courcelles, and Tourville, and it was a joyous meeting. De Courcelles, in his French effusiveness, almost embraced me, and then he called my attention to his fine Confederate uniform.

"I could not resist," he said. "I did not come to this country to fight. *Sacré nom de guerre, non!* It was none of my business. I was to be a diplomat. A wise man never meddles in the affairs of a land other than his own, but I saw this uniform, I put it on, it fitted so beautifully, I looked so well in it that I became full of warlike ardour, my veins burned with fire; I saw myself leading the charging squadrons, *un grand Napoléon*. I hastened to the Confederate authorities. 'You



have a chance to get one great soldier; take me quick, before I join the Northern army,' I said, and they took me quick. So behold me the faithful and devoted soldier of the Southern States of America, whose quarrel is no business of mine."

"And a good soldier he has made," said Pembroke. "He has been promoted twice for gallantry in action."

"It was the splendid uniform, not I!" cried De Courcelles. "*Sacré nom de guerre, non!*"

Tourville's greeting was as warm as ever, but he was much more quiet than in the old days before the war. I looked at him with curiosity to see the reason of this great change, and Pembroke's eyes followed mine. He laughed and then said:

"It's true, it's the same old Tourville, but he's changed. A lot of that hot South Carolina blood was let out of him on the field of Seven Pines, where an inconsiderate bullet passed through his shoulder.—Isn't it so, Tourville?"

"It's true, of course," replied Tourville, and he smiled. "We are not going to give you fellows, Kingsford, your beating as soon as you deserve, but we are going to do it nevertheless."

"Thanks for the present," I said, "but after we shall have been properly punished and the Confederacy duly formed, what is going to happen to it should South Carolina become dissatisfied with her condition?"

"Do you know, Henry," exclaimed Pembroke, "that there is an old Virginia colonel up here, who says, 'By God, sah, South Carolina brought on the war, and Virginia has to fight it!'"

"It is untrue, like all other epigrams!" exclaimed Tourville, defensively.

"Come outside," said Pembroke; "I have something of importance to tell you, something that con-

cerns you very nearly. De Courcelles and Tourville also know it and they can come with us."

His face became grave, and I followed him into the yard. We sat down there on a little mound of earth, and other prisoners who were taking the air looked curiously at us, but refrained from speaking or coming too near.

"Varian is in Richmond," said Pembroke.

"I do not see how that is bad news for me," I replied. "The man's character must become known to the Confederate authorities, and they will not tolerate such conduct as his."

"But you do not understand the situation," continued Pembroke. "Varian tells a story altogether unlike yours. Don't flush that way—I never said that I believed him. I've known you too long, Henry, to think that you would lie. I merely give his tale as he tells it. He says you were his prisoner, and that he treated you with the utmost kindness, allowing you to remain in your house. He gave you your parole and you foully broke it. You slipped away, and then you cozened and kidnapped a young girl to whom he was betrothed, going with her through some sort of a ceremony and then attempting to escape to the Northern lines, but fortunately he recaptured you both. His lieutenant, Blanchard, swears that everything Varian tells is the truth."

"They lie! They lie in every word!" I broke out indignantly.

"So they do," continued Pembroke; "but he has brought Mrs. Maynard with him from the West, and she too supports Varian in all or most that he says. Oh, she is furious against you! And you must bear in mind, Henry, that Varian is one of our most brilliant leaders. They say that he can become a Jeb Stuart or even a Stonewall Jackson if he has the opportunity. He has rendered us services of the greatest value, and as

we are expecting more and greater from him, how can the authorities punish him, especially when he pleads not guilty? Think—think, Henry, how little the word of a mere prisoner, an enemy to us, will weigh against the assertion of one of our most brilliant and influential generals, even in the minds of men most honourable and fair-minded.”

“And he makes no secret of his love for the beautiful young Madam Kingsford!” exclaimed De Courcelles. “That creates him sympathy and friends, and, *mon Dieu*, you are a most troublesome fellow, Monsieur Kingsford. Half the young men left in Richmond are already wishing that somebody would make your lovely wife your widow. But you have friends too. There is a faction that applauds you because you were bold enough to steal away the girl who loved you. Your very presumption, Mr. Kingsford, has made you admirers, as one of whom I beg to present myself.”

“He speaks the truth,” said Pembroke. “Your fame is made and you did not know it. Everybody is talking about you, and the young fellows have hung around our door to get a sight of Elinor, who they hear is the most beautiful woman in the world. The newspapers have taken up the affair, and naturally they have divided. The Whig supports you warmly, but the Examiner insists that Varian has been wronged foully, and that you ought to be shot. Varian himself is most active. He has seen President Davis, and he is to have an interview with General Lee, who will be here in a few days. He wants the courts to annul this marriage, and he is going to bring all possible pressure to bear upon them.”

“The courts can do nothing without Elinor,” I said with scorn.

“That is true, but Mrs. Maynard makes a demand for Elinor, who is a minor, and we shall be compelled to give her up, as her aunt is her legal guardian.”

"They can not break Elinor's will even then," I said confidently.

"No," replied Pembroke, "but something may happen to you, and after that could a young girl resist such pressure always? But I trust, Henry, you will not forget that you have friends outside these walls who will work for you according to their power."

They left us, and, despite my faith in Elinor, I had gloomy days—more for her than for myself. Her love for me was proving her misfortune, but I would not dream of giving it up.

Time passed. My friends came to see me occasionally, but Elinor never. They told me that she was with her aunt, and could visit as she chose in the city, but permission to enter the prison and see me was denied her. It was Varian's influence, they had no doubt. Then these loyal friends too disappeared, and there came rumours to us in the prison of some great movement. Although it was winter, the armies of the North were advancing, and a battle was impending. Then came another rumour—one that filled our prison with sad faces. The North had failed again. Burnside had hurled his army against Lee, who stood on the hills of Fredericksburg, and our forces had been cut to pieces. Fifteen thousand of our brave men had fallen—to no purpose.

"Is it always to be this way?" groaned one of my fellow-prisoners, a captain. "Do our generals think that we have too many men, and try to get them killed off?"

I could give him no comfort, and when Pembroke came back the story that he told me did not relieve our gloom.

"It was a headlong charge against an impregnable position," he said. "Your troops were as brave as mortal men could be, and they attacked not once or twice but a half-dozen times or more. But it was not

in human flesh and blood to stand so much, and they had to retreat at last."

It was a bitter cold morning when he told me this, and I had been allowed to walk in a court a little for fresh air. I shivered, both from the effects of the cold and the tale that he had to tell.

"The city is exultant," he says; "but God knows I can not rejoice over the killing and wounding of so many of our brethren."

It was a dark, lowering day, full of mists and vapours. The cold winds blew down from the hills and moaned around the brick walls of the old tobacco warehouse that had become Libby Prison. I looked at the gloomy building and forbidding skies and longed for freedom.

"What of Elinor?" I asked at last. But she had been in my mind all the time.

"She is still with her aunt in the house that Mrs. Maynard has taken in Grace Street near ours," said Pembroke. "My mother and sisters go to see her there, and she has had her share in the winter gaities of Richmond; not that she enjoys them—I can not say so much, but it was best for her to do so, at least to make the appearance. She has been present at a dinner and a reception at the President's house, and she may go wherever she chooses, save here."

I felt a pang of pain and jealousy. Elinor in the midst of winter gaities, while I, her husband, was lying in prison, but I dismissed it in a moment as an unworthy thought against the truest woman in the world. It was right for her to hold up her head and defy all our enemies.

One of the guards, a rough but kind-hearted North Carolinian, called on me the next day and told me that I was to see a lady who was waiting in a room next to the commandant's office.

"A purty one too, she is," he said in his mountain

dialect; "an' now march along, will you, Mr. Kingsford, 'cause I've got orders ter watch yer and shoot yer if yer try ter break out, which I hope, fer yer own sake and mine too, yer won't try ter do."

I promised him that I would not provoke a shot, and went on ahead in the way that he indicated, feeling sure that the lady was Miss Pembroke, and hoping to hear from her news that her brother would never think to bring. Women are much better news-bearers than men on these occasions.

"In thar," said my guard. "Thar's nobody else in thar but her, and nobody else ain't goin' ter hear what yer say; but recollec' that ef yer try ter break out, I'm here at the door with a gun."

I pushed open the door and entered. It was dark in the little room, and a lady wrapped in a heavy fur cloak sat in a chair, waiting. I did not need to see her face; the mere outline of that figure was enough. I knew that it was Elinor. "Elinor!" I cried, and the next moment she was in my arms.

"Yes, it is I, Henry," she said, "and I have come to see you at last. Had you thought me faithless?"

I called punishment upon my own head for that single moment of doubt. There was nothing but truth in her eyes and voice, nor could ever be.

"How did you secure leave to come here?" I asked, as we sat down side by side.

She smiled and then laughed—a low laugh, but yet a laugh.

"It was a woman who did it," she said. "Even I myself. It was at President Davis's reception to his victorious generals three nights ago—behold how I have fallen into the Southern habit of calling him 'President'—and I walked with him a little in the halls when the others were dancing. I think he likes me, Henry, and—and I sought especially to please him that evening. I said I thought the Confederacy would triumph.



Won't I get forgiveness for saying that, Henry? And I indicated rather than spoke of the wisdom with which it was governed—all men are only mortal, Henry, and we women learn these weak points; we must if we mean to continue our rule. I could have led you more easily; he was difficult—oh, so difficult!—and I all the time thinking of you here in this gloomy prison. And then I began to talk of you. I said to him that if he were locked up in a prison and his wife were here in the city, going wherever she chose, except where her husband was, would he not feel that he was treated badly? 'But, my dear young madam,' he protested, 'you have been deceived. You have married this man under a misapprehension as to his character. General Varian, one of our most brilliant and deserving leaders says that Mr. Kingsford broke his parole. We ought to have him shot, and perhaps it is for your sake that I do not have it done. I know you love him, and that is why you believe what he says; but it is a fatal truth that a woman both good and brilliant may love a bad or even foolish man. There is your aunt, who has had both experience and judgment, who, although knowing nothing about the question of the parole, is as bitter as General Varian against this young man.'

"But I would not let him talk me down, Henry. I insisted that a woman's instinct was true; that you would not do anything dishonourable, and that General Varian said these things of you because he hated you. 'It might be so,' he replied under his breath—so very low, but I heard him—and when he said it he gave me a queer look. Then he laughed and added: 'well, I shall let you see this man. It can do no harm, perhaps, although I am sure that it will do no good either.' But he wrote the order that very evening—I would not let him wait—although he made it good for to-day only; and now I have come, Henry."

I asked her then about her life in Richmond.



“I have many friends,” she said. “Nobody could be kinder to me than the Pembrokes, and Mary is the dearest girl in the world. De Courcelles thinks so too, and swears that he has been devoted all his life to the cause of the South, even before he ever saw America, and he is a zealous defender of the Southern cause, most zealous of all when Mary is present. And I have other friends too. It is why I have accepted the hospitality of all these kind people in Richmond, and have gone with them to their entertainments. I was selfish in it perhaps, but I was selfish for you, for us. I wished to secure the aid of those powerful enough to defeat the plans of General Varian against us, and I believe that I have, Henry.”

I kissed her hands, saying that never did man have such a wife as mine. She blushed with pleasure, and I say, moreover, that what I said I meant. The short time allotted to us passed all too soon, but even after she was gone the light of her presence seemed to illuminate for me the gloomy prison.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### BEFORE THE GENERALS

I HOPED that Elinor would come again soon, but time passed and she did not, nor did I hear from her; neither did any message come from Pembroke, Tourville, or De Courcelles, and I supposed that they had been called away from Richmond by the stress of military duty, a wholly likely guess. Elinor, I presumed, was not able to obtain leave to visit me a second time, and I resigned myself as best I could to an absence of all news from those for whom I cared most. I had heard nothing, of course, from my grandmother, but I believed that she and William Penn were safe. The centre of the war in the West seemed to have shifted from the neighbourhood of her house and to the southward. I was wondering who would prove our future leaders to victory, when my North Carolina guard told me in his rough but friendly way that I had visitors again. Two men were waiting this time to see me in the same little office next to that of the commandant. Pembroke and De Courcelles, I thought likely, as I was escorted to the room, but I had never seen before the two who awaited me there. They did not rise as I entered, but the elder motioned me quickly and with authority to a chair evidently placed for me.

I took the seat and met their stern, inquiring gaze with confidence. I have said that I never saw them before, but I knew them nevertheless. I was fully aware that I was in the presence of Lee and Jackson,

the two great military figures of the Confederacy. We had heard so much about them in the prison—they had been described to us so often—that I could not be mistaken. My gaze, therefore, was as curious as theirs. General Lee sat nearest to me, a large man of impressive appearance, with a great dome of a head and open features. He was dressed with the most exact neatness, in his general's uniform of Confederate gray, with a splendid sword at his side. He was the embodiment of dignity, and seemed to be in all respects a man who knew the world and its manners. Involuntarily I made a contrast between him and Lincoln, and yet I think there was something alike in their characters, although one preferred his State to his country, a view with which I can not agree.

Stonewall Jackson was more like Lincoln in figure and general appearance, barring the Northern President's great height. He looked bent and awkward as he sat in the chair. An old gray cloak was wrapped about the upper part of his body, and came almost to his chin. His military boots were splashed with mud. His face was almost hidden by a thick, black, and ragged beard, and the flap of his hat, which he did not take off; but a pair of eyes as fiery as a coal glittered through the black tangle and let no movement or expression of mine escape them. Such was "Fool Tom" Jackson, the eccentric professor in peace, the great Stonewall Jackson of the civil war.

"Mr. Kingsford," said General Lee, speaking in slow and precise tones, "there is a strange tale of you which has penetrated every house in Richmond, which has even reached our army at the front, and has been a cause of gossip around our camp fires. It connects you with a young lady and one of my most valiant and trusted officers."

I saw that his cool gray eyes were watching me intently, and I did not flinch from his gaze.

“I can imagine what it is,” I said, as he paused, seeming to wait for a reply. “The young lady is Elinor Kingsford, my wife, and the man is Philip Augustus Varian, a general in your service.”

“Quite correct,” he said. “It is understood that you charged General Varian with attempting your life, or indirectly inciting attempts upon it, for private reasons. General Varian, on the contrary, denies this, saying too that you broke your parole, and stole a young lady away from her guardian.”

“Perhaps we had better drop the charge of stealing the young lady,” suddenly said General Jackson, speaking for the first time. “If you were of his age and were in love with her, you might have stolen her too.”

I was surprised and delighted at this unexpected support from such a quarter, but General Jackson said no more. A faint smile appeared on General Lee’s face, and the look that he bent upon me softened a little.

“General Jackson is right,” he said. “That sin, if it be a sin at all, is one of the sins of youth, and we can scarcely punish it in a country like ours, where it is happening many thousand times every year. But the matter of your parole is much more serious. You are aware that we can not deny the word of such a man as General Varian, and you have not a single witness to support your claim.”

“No, but I speak the truth,” I said boldly.

“There are those in the city who believe in you,” he continued, “and more who would support you if they could for your wife’s sake. It makes the strangest case that I have ever known, and because of its peculiar features we have come here at the President’s own request to see you and speak with you. Will you tell us this entire story?”

I related all the facts, so far as I knew them, from

the beginning to the end, keeping Elinor as much in the background as I could, as I did not wish to discuss my wife with anybody. They listened with the most absorbed attention, an interest that seemed to me extraordinary on the part of two great generals, weighted with the cares of a mighty civil war. However straight my story, and however great the interest that Elinor might have excited in Richmond, our fate bore little relation to the work of these two men. Yet they missed no detail; instead, they often asked me to tell over again parts of my narrative, and always those parts were about Varian. I did not dream then of what was in their minds, nor did I have any intimation of it until long afterward.

"Yours is a tale which we would not have believed," said Stonewall Jackson, speaking for the second time, "but there is a witness."

"A witness!" I exclaimed.

He nodded his head.

"My wife?" I asked.

"No," said General Lee, "not your wife. It would be held generally that she is not an impartial witness. We speak of another—a man, a Southern soldier. Do you know Major Titus Tyler, of Mississippi?"

I felt a sudden sense of shame. I had scarcely thought of the good major since last I saw him, but I quickly answered in the affirmative.

"A good man and a brave one," said General Lee; "but not of great judgment, and overfond of talking. Still, all say that he is truthful. He was severely wounded in a skirmish in the Valley of Virginia a day or two after your escape from General Varian, and has just been invalided to Richmond. And he tells a tale, Mr. Kingsford, with which you are connected—a tale that is far more extraordinary than yours, one that we are compelled to investigate."

"May I ask what it is?" I said, in growing wonder.

“Not now,” he replied, “although you will know beyond a doubt some day. But in view of the testimony of Major Tyler we have decided to keep you here and not exchange you, at least not for the present, and you need not concern yourself about the matter of the parole. As for the young lady, we have decided, with the full concurrence of the President, to take her from her aunt and place her with Mrs. Pembroke and her daughter. We would not have a right to do it if we were opposed, but there will be no opposition. You must be content with this.”

“I am more than content,” I said with deep gratitude. Yet I felt mystified, as if Elinor’s fortunes and mine had become entangled with others. But I was grateful enough to accept with thanks this unknown factor in our behalf. Elinor with her aunt was more or less in the power of Varian, and her removal to the house of the Pembrokes was a triumph.

The two generals then bade me a courteous good day and left. I was destined to see both once again, but under far different circumstances.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### ON A NARROW STAGE

AND now Christmas was approaching. A gloomy Christmas it was for those who loved the Union, smarting under the great defeat at Fredericksburg, and gloomiest Christmas of all it was for us, locked in a prison under triple guards, and suffering from the deadly monotony of such a life—a life shut off from all the world and its interests. I can not now think of a man in prison, even though he be a criminal, without a thrill of pity. I know what it is to be held by four walls.

But the holiday feeling, even in those gloomy times, penetrated the barriers of brick and stone, passed the numerous sentinels with their loaded guns, and reached the poor prisoners who waited so longingly for the news of great victories that never came. We felt it in our bones, and for days past the most active among us had been arranging for a celebration, an evening of Christmas theatricals, an event the rumours of which had gone already outside the prison, and excited the wonder of the people of Richmond. The preparations were far advanced even when the two generals paid me their visit, and I was to take a part.

Our guards were kind to us then, and it was with no great difficulty that we obtained permission from the Confederate authorities to display our dramatic talents. People had not grown so hard as they became



in the later years of the war, and we found plenty of sympathy. It was said, too, that Richmond itself, owing to the increasing curiosity in the city concerning our venture, would send as many spectators as the military authorities would allow.

Our ambition grew with this news, and we decided to give our entertainment in a manner that was right and fitting. The majority of us had a little money, and I received the appointment to solicit funds for programmes, succeeding well in the task. The authorities permitted us to hire the work from one of the newspaper offices outside, and in due time the programmes came. I have one of them yet, and even now, as I write these lines, I stop a little to take it out of the drawer and look at it, and smile at the memory of the men—boys rather—who worked with such eager zest to prepare that Christmas festival. Nor is there much sadness in the recollection. Nearly all of them are living yet, the majority scarcely in middle age. A few, exchanged or escaped, fell on later battle-fields.

It was a long and varied entertainment that our programmes announced, and perhaps it would not be called intellectual drama now, but it was the best that we could do with our slender resources, and you will admit, perhaps, that our art lacked freedom of development. The printer did well by us, giving us the worth of our money, finishing the programmes in handsome style, and putting around each a border, but with grim humour making this border a chain. We appreciated the jest and made no objection. Our evening was to begin with a minstrel performance consisting of more than twenty songs, dances, and instrumental selections, closing with a short piece called *The Rival Claimants*. Then we were to give, after an intermission, a comedy entitled *The Countryman in Town*, which would be our severest dramatic effort, and the evening would

close with a grand masquerade ball, in which all the members of the company were to take part.

We worked with the most extraordinary zest. We had nothing else to do, and it was a happy idea, a relief from the deadly monotony of our lives. We bought a violin, a bass-viol, a banjo, and a flute: it was not difficult to find men who could play them after a fashion, and thus we provided for an orchestra. The "cook room," a great apartment on the first floor, convenient because of its size, was to be the scene of our festivities, and we sent word, through the guards, to the people in the city that the audience were expected to bring their seats with them. We could provide none.

I dwell upon these details, both for their own sake and because of what followed, making that the most memorable Christmas night in my life.

I was not hoping for any message from Elinor, not expecting that fortune would be so kind; but, two days before Christmas, Mary Pembroke, blond and happy—I suspected that she had a letter from De Courcelles—saw me in the prison, and told me that Elinor would be there on Christmas night, coming with her and her mother.

Christmas night arrived, bringing its early winter darkness, and the old warehouse was filled with the noise and confusion of untried actors and stage managers. The curtain was to rise at seven o'clock, and it was promised to us that "lights out" would not sound until twelve o'clock instead of nine, the usual hour. We had built a stage of old boxes at one end of the room, and an expanse of red calico hanging from a string was our curtain.

Three tallow candles served as footlights, and behold, the theatre was complete! All the actors were gathered in the rear of the stage, behind another curtain, making ready for their parts, and every one of us was as eager as a beginner on the real stage. The senti-

nels, feeling secure of us, and moved by curiosity, as their lives, like ours, were full of deadly dullness, watched the curtain with interest, and relaxed somewhat the severity of their discipline.

I dwell again upon details that you, who go where you please and see what you please, may know to what straits we were reduced within the walls of a military prison, and how we struggled even there to maintain our interest in the affairs of men.

"Shall we have a good house to-night, do you think, eh, Kingsford?" asked George Warren, a young lieutenant from Massachusetts, who was cast for a tambourine dance, and whose good spirits were unfailing.

"We can plead that our opportunities are limited," I replied.

Ours was a cheerful company. The Christmas feeling had come undoubtedly; our work aroused gaiety in us all, and now and then we lifted the curtain to cast jests at the guards, who received them with good humour, and paid them back as best they could in like fashion. The orchestra was testing its instruments, and the notes of the flute mingled with the tanging of the violin strings. A farm lad named Sullivan, from Wisconsin, was to play the violin, and almost unconsciously his bow slid into the air of Home, Sweet Home. "If you don't stop that, Sullivan," exclaimed Warren suddenly, "I'll take your fiddle away from you and break it over your own head! Play anything else but that!" "I guess you're right," said Sullivan, submissively, and he gave a few notes of Yankee Doodle.

"They're coming! The audience is coming," said Harris, an eager boy of not more than seventeen, and we peeped through the curtain to see the first arrivals. It was a party of three Confederate officers, three civilians, and four ladies, bringing with them some empty nail kegs, which were to serve as orchestra chairs, and

two lanterns. They took their seats quietly and waited with great curiosity for the raising of the curtain.

The audience now came rapidly, and I watched their entrance as much as my duties would allow, waiting all the while for those whom I wished most to see. I saw them at last—Elinor, Mrs. Pembroke, Miss Pembroke, and Tourville. Tourville carried his left arm in a sling, and I inferred that he had received another and a recent wound, thus accounting for his absence from the front. Elinor was paler than when I had last seen her, and she too watched the curtain with eyes which were full of deep expectation. I would have given her a sign, some word or gesture of greeting, but I could not.

Our curiosity was not inferior to that of the audience, and we appreciated too the friendly interest that was shown in us. Confederate officers were numerous in the crowd, but civilians constituted the majority. The lights of the lanterns and the tallow candles flickered over them and only half dispelled the dark in the great, gloomy room. I think it is rare that a line of armed guards divide the players on the stage from the spectators, though it might be wise; however, it was a trifle that we did not mind, and the curtain was ready to rise. Elinor and her friends were sitting very near the stage, but they did not see me until the evening was half over, my part not calling for my appearance until then.

We began with a minstrel show, a form of theatrical entertainment most popular at that time, and our men played the tambourine, the bones, and the banjo with much enthusiasm and what skill they had, pleasing the audience mightily and drawing continued applause. Thus the friendly relations between actors and people increased, and the guards became more lax; in truth, there was little reason at all for their vigilance, as around us were the walls of the prison; beyond them

lay the hostile city, and beyond that the country as hostile. There was much laughter, but I saw what looked to me like tears in Elinor's eyes. She beheld only the pathetic side of our little show.

We rose in ambition after the minstrel performance. Those of us who had voices sang passages from *Ernani* and *Norma*, and we even gave the serenade from *Lucia di Lammermoor*. But it was in the little one-act play, the *Rival Claimants*, that I appeared just for a minute, and only to speak a dozen words or so, as my histrionic abilities are not large, and I took a part solely because I was needed. Elinor's eyes met mine for a moment, and she smiled. But the smile was pathetic, as her look throughout the evening had been.

The performance was passing smoothly; the applause increased; we were on the friendliest terms with our audience, and we reached the culmination of our genius, the short comedy *The Countryman in Town*. This, too, was passing to the music of applause and conscious success, when I saw one of the flickering candles in the front row of the spectators blaze up suddenly. A woman had leaned over too far, and the light, fluffy sleeve of her dress caught fire from the candle. An officer sitting next to her instantly put out the blaze with his military cloak before any harm was done, but not too soon to stop a panic. The ladies nearest to the scene of the accident cried out in fear, the men rushed forward to help, and in ten seconds the room was in confusion; some of the more timid fled toward the door, the guards forgot their duties in their eagerness to help put out the fire, and the officers were shouting in unbelieving ears that nothing was wrong.

I was standing at the very edge of the stage when this accident, so trifling in itself, so great in its consequences to me, occurred, and I saw as if in a flash of light the opportunity created so suddenly. I sprang from the stage and darted among the crowd, too con-

fused now to pay any attention to me—all save one. A light hand was on my arm, and a glowing face was near mine.

“By the wall, where it is dark, Henry!” she exclaimed; “and they will not notice you.”

I ran by the west wall, where the lights were fewest, and toward the door. It was so simple that I was amazed at my own fortune. The exultant hope of liberty gave me presence of mind. I snatched from a chair the cap and cloak of an officer, and rushed through the doorway and down a hall. A sentinel met me.

“In there at once!” I cried, “and help them put out the fire, or our own people will be burned to death!” Thus spreading the alarm among the guards, I fled past them all and through the door and gates, and presently I was outside the prison and in the cold free air of Christmas night, scarcely realizing how it was done.

I had not the slightest fear for Elinor. The tumult was subsiding even before I left the room, and she was in no danger whatever. I heard long afterward that the play was resumed with entire equanimity in fifteen minutes, and that I was not missed either by the guards or those behind the curtain—my part was finished—until the play was over, the audience was gone, “Lights out!” were sounded, and Christmas morning had begun. But I have heard too that one Confederate officer swore profoundly when he found that he had to go to his quarters in the wintry air without his cap and cloak.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

### IN THE WILDERNESS

I STOPPED in the street, bewildered a moment by my freedom, but I retained presence of mind to set the cap in a jaunty and careless way on the side of my head, and to let the cloak hang in rakish fashion from my shoulders. Then I walked along for all the world like a young officer returning from a Christmas eve call upon his sweetheart. I was out of the prison, but not out of Richmond, yet I was confident that I could escape. I believed that it was about half past ten o'clock, and I knew that it was cold. A citizen, a substantial man of middle age, looking like a merchant, stopped me and asked me if anything was happening at the prison, as he had just heard a rumour of trouble there. I told him the exact truth about the accident, and thanking me, he went on. My cap and cloak were Southern, my accent Southern, and he never suspected.

I passed Capitol Square before I chose a course, and then I turned my steps toward the James. I had been in Richmond only once before in my life, coming there as a military prisoner, and my recollections were vague in some respects, but I believed that I could reach the river without interruption. My belief was justified, and soon I stood upon the banks of the James, a silent torrent, but as cold as ice. I had conceived a hazy idea of swimming to the Manchester shore, from which point I could escape more easily through the



fortifications, but one look at the river showed me how foolish was the hope. My muscles would be paralyzed by the icy current and I would drown helplessly. My heart sank. I had breathed the breath of freedom a half hour, and it intoxicated me. My mind was filled already with dreams of an escape to Washington, the rescue of Elinor, and an end to all our troubles.

I wandered by the shore a long time, hiding when I heard or saw any one coming, and vainly seeking to devise some plan of further flight. When I grew cold I crept once into an empty and abandoned tobacco hogshead lying on the ground. The warmth was so grateful that I lay there some time, and while within its shelter I heard clocks strike the hour of twelve, and the bells in the spire of a church ring in Christmas morning. The sound was wonderfully clear and distinct in the frosty air, and peace seemed to hang over the city for which the hosts of the North and South were fighting. But the holiday glow had left me. I felt lonely and discouraged, and I was tempted to wish myself back in Libby with my comrades, where I might at least hear friendly voices and see sympathetic faces. But this feeling was short. Triumphs were not won in such a spirit, and coming out of the hogshead, I began anew to plan. I was aware, too, that if I did anything I must do it soon, as I might be missed at any moment, and even before then some vigilant soldier might demand why I lounged along the shores of the James at such an hour.

The city was still quiet. I heard scarcely a sound. The stars winked in the clear cold heavens, and lights shone here and there from a window. I came presently to a little group of cabins, apparently of the kind inhabited by coloured people, and I heard the sound of an axe. An old negro was cutting wood in the rear of a hut, and I watched him a little while, letting the new idea that was born in my mind grow there. I would

risk everything on a single chance, and if I lost I could say that I would have lost anyhow, as there was nothing else to do.

"Uncle," I said to the old man, "can you show me how to escape from Richmond?"

He raised his axe defensively, startled by my voice, as he had neither seen nor heard my approach. When his apprehension disappeared he looked at me in surprise.

"You, a Confedrit officer, ask me that question!" he said.

"I am not a Confederate officer," I replied. "I am a Northern soldier just escaped from Libby Prison."

Then I awaited in doubt his answer. It is a strange truth, and perhaps not so strange, that many of the coloured people whom we were fighting to free regarded the Northern soldiers as ogres, and remained throughout the war loyal to their Southern masters.

"See!" I said, opening my cloak and showing the faded and dingy blue of a Northern uniform.

"Come into the house, marster," he said, and led the way through the kitchen door into his cabin. He lighted a candle, set it on the table, and motioned me to a seat in the single chair that the kitchen could boast. Then he went into the only other room that the house had, and came forth presently with his wife, a woman of some fifty-five or sixty years, much larger and evidently of much more decided character than her lord and master. Then, standing there in the middle of the little kitchen, they held a conference upon my fate, while I sat meekly in the chair awaiting the verdict. The woman at length spoke up.

"We can't get you out o' Richmond to-night," she said. "It'll have to be done by the river when we do it, but the night's too bright. If my old man tried to paddle away with you he'd be seen shore."

"Then you can do nothing for me?" I asked.

"We ain't said that yet," she replied. "Jest you hide here in our room till the chance comes, and we'll get you out o' Richmond."

No one ever had more loyal and devoted friends than that humble old coloured couple who never saw me until that night, and who hid me without hope of reward. I remained more than three weeks in their little cabin, slipping out now and then at night, and awaiting a favourable chance to escape by the river. They even served me in other ways, as I asked the woman to go to the house of the Pembrokes in Grace Street, call for Mrs. Elinor Kingsford, and tell her how I fared. That was after I had been with them ten days, and the woman returned, her eyes shining in her black face.

"Did you see her?" I asked eagerly.

"Yes, marster," she replied, "an' I'm mighty glad now fur the sake of that chile that we've tried to help you."

"What did she say?" I asked, with increasing eagerness.

"She cried a little, and said she was so glad you'd found friends, an' she hoped you'd git out o' Richmon' soon. She said she'd come to see you, but she dassen't."

"That must not be! You must not permit it!" I said. "She would be watched, and it might make trouble for her."

"I ain't no fool," said the woman gravely. "I wouldn't tell her whar I live, 'cause I was afraid she'd come anyhow. Don't you believe them white ladies when they say they dassen't go to see their husbands, an' I spects the coloured ones are about the same."

The old man brought me a report, a few days after the new year, that a great battle had been fought in the West, on the last day of the old year, near Stone River, Tennessee, as bloody, as desperate, and as indecisive as Shiloh. There was little comfort in this news to a lover of a united country. The North must do

more than fight drawn battles to hold the Union together.

The dark night came at last. The man had secured a skiff, and he said that he would steal up the river with me, landing me in the woods, where a friend of his, another black man, would meet me.

"Take care o' yourself, marster, for the sake of that purty gal in Richmon' that loves you," said the woman at parting.

I promised, and I spoke of a hope to reward her some day, but she would hear of nothing, and went back into the house with a caution to her husband to be careful. She was a true soul in a humble station, risking much for what she believed was right, and without a thought of pay.

The night was pitchy dark, otherwise we would not have made the venture, and we ran the gantlet safely. We passed a gunboat once, her lights burning on the deck, but our skiff slid by in the darkness like a phantom, and no one saw us. We heard, too, the rattle of arms on shore and saw the lights of forts, but we passed them all unchallenged, and before morning my guide, protector, and friend landed me in the woods, where another coloured man, old and gnarled like himself, met us. He called the second man Thomas, his own name was Ephraim, and I never knew the last name of either. Thomas was a woodcutter, almost a hermit, living alone in the tangle of forest and undergrowth far to the northeast of Richmond. He was to take charge of me, delivered like a bale of goods by his friend Ephraim, and pass me through the Confederate lines as soon as the opportunity came. They used to send slaves North by the underground route, and now, the case being reversed, I seemed to be passing that way. There was a certain humour and no humiliation in the thought.

"Good-bye, Ephraim," I said; "no man has truer

friends than Malinda"—Malinda was his wife—"and you have been to me."

I still had gold, which I carried in an inside pocket of my waistcoat, and I thrust half of it in his hand; I wished to keep the other half for Thomas. He sought to give it back, but I held my hands behind me, and asked Thomas to lead the way through the forest. I looked back once, and saw him stow the gold in his pocket, and then get into his boat. It was but small repayment that I could make him.

Thomas and I walked briskly until sunrise. He was a little, bent old negro, but wonderfully sturdy and enduring. He had a broad, honest face, and I never felt the slightest doubt of his trustworthiness. The long, swift walk through the forest, the little black man flitting on before like a ghost, filled me with a sense of exhilaration. The cold air invited exercise, and the blood, grown sluggish by long inactivity, began to flow again in a vigorous torrent through my veins.

The house of Thomas, a log hut standing in a tiny clearing, was even smaller than Ephraim's, but it was destined to be my home much longer than I had anticipated. The line of the Confederate posts stretched between Washington and me, so Thomas told me, and the Southern troops were exercising the greatest vigilance and caution. The winter season even did not permit relaxation, as the battle of Fredericksburg, fought in December, showed that cold weather guaranteed no immunity from a campaign. I might be captured or I might not if I made the attempt, but in any event the risk was great, and I chose not to make the trial at present. I had been a captive too often to return to Libby with a good grace, and I stayed with the old man, biding my time. The days passed and the opportunity did not come; the Southern lines converged more closely around us, and that lone little hut in the woods seemed to have become a focus of great military

movements. Thomas told me that the forest was full of the Southern cavalry, and he cautioned me to stay close in the house.

It was nearly February when I arrived there, and I saw some of the winter storms sweep through the woods. A deep snow fell once, and I heard the boughs cracking like pistol shots under its weight. The Southern cavalry would not ride so freely in such weather, but it was an equal obstacle to me, it being almost impossible to go on foot through it to Washington or the Northern army, and Thomas said that the attempt would be madness. So I lingered, and when the snow passed away the Southern troops came again, often passing through the clearing in which stood the hut. They entered it once to warm their cold hands by the fire, but I was lying then in the little loft just under the roof, extended full length on the rafters, and they never dreamed of my presence. I heard their talk distinctly through the numerous cracks between the planks, and I gathered from it that they expected another advance of the Northern army as soon as the spring began and the roads dried sufficiently for the passage of the artillery. I heard them mention Varian's name once. It seemed that he was in command of a considerable body of cavalry in the neighbourhood, and he was expected to keep in touch with the Northern horse and watch every hostile movement. They spoke highly of his skill and vigilance, and the knowledge of his proximity showed me how great had been my need of caution. I saw now the full reason of Thomas's advice to wait.

The winter passed thus, and I was still at the hut in the woods. I tried twice to escape through the Southern lines, but on each occasion was forced to turn back for fear of recapture. Thomas went into Richmond and, following my instructions, was able, with the aid of Ephraim, to bring back a message from Elinor. She was yet with the Pembrokes, being accepted now as



almost one of the family, and she would remain there until she received a message from me to come.

Old Virginia grew green and then bloomed under the touch of spring, and I was devoured by impatience. To be held there so long, almost in sight of my goal, was the utmost trial, and I grew sore in spirit. A third attempt proved futile like the others, but, waiting a week longer, I prepared myself for a fourth, resolved not to turn back, no matter what befell me. Every motive now induced my departure, as it was evident, from the reports brought by Thomas, that some great military movement was impending. The Northern army was advancing and a battle would be fought. I could not lie there in the forest at such a time, to be taken any day by scouting troopers like a rabbit in a snare. I was filled, too, with the desire for action, and I did not wish to be pursued always by others. I was tired of being a prisoner or a fugitive.

Thomas gave me a little knapsack filled with food, and I made him take the last of the gold, except a few pieces that I must use on the way to Washington. He was like Ephraim, and did not wish to accept it, but I compelled him. I think it was his plan to go at once to Richmond and buy a pair of fine new axes, tools that would delight the soul of this honest black wood-cutter.

I knew the general direction of Washington and I laid my course by the sun, starting at sunrise of a beautiful spring morning, and walking steadily. I kept to the woods and fields, avoiding the roads, which I was sure would be trodden by the Southern forces. I saw their cavalry three times, and once a troop of horse which I believed to be ours, although they were too far away for me to reach by signal, and were soon gone at a speed that forbade any hope of my joining them. But I was strong and eager, and I walked many miles that day, adopting the Indian pace—the long, swinging gait



that gives the greatest speed with the least fatigue—and when night came I was far on the journey toward Washington. The country was unknown to me, but I still travelled by the sun and had no fear that I was going in the wrong direction. My journey so far was a success. Nowhere had I found the way barred. The Confederate lines seemed to have been shifted farther toward the northeast, and I believed it to be a result of the preparations for the impending battle. I stopped just after dark in a clump of woods to eat some of the cold food that Thomas had put in the knapsack, and to rest a while. It was a fine, clear night, myriads of stars twinkling in a sky of silky blue, and the warm air was laden with the fresh odours of spring.

It was not a beautiful country into which I had come: a wilderness of bleak, red hills, half clad in a scrubby second growth of forest; many gullies washed here and there by the rains, and now and then an "old field" grown up with sassafras bushes. I passed over an ancient and abandoned iron furnace, but inhabitants there seemed to be none.

I was in the sombre shades of the Wilderness, that gloomy region of Virginia whose sanguinary recollections even now appal the Americans who fought there, an area of land that bore more dead men's bones than any other of modern times. But I had no thought then of what the future was to bring. I ate the bacon and corn bread, sitting on a fallen log in the dense thicket and invisible to any one twenty feet away. I wished to take a good rest and travel all the remainder of the night, as darkness was my best protection, and I hoped that the morning would see me in the Northern army or at least beyond the Southern lines. While I was sitting there I heard faint and far the note of a trumpet—Ta-ra-ra-ta-ra-ra! It was repeated and grew louder, and then was answered from the left by another trumpet. Cavalry again I was sure, and they were converging upon

me, although unconscious of it. But I felt no alarm. I was hidden in the thicket as securely as a rabbit in its burrow, and no horse would enter such a covert. I stood up among the bushes and saw a line of cavalry passing along a woodland path, showing but a little while against the clear sky and then disappearing. The sound of the trumpets became fainter and died.

I resumed my flight about nine o'clock, having marked well the direction, and pressed forward with all diligence. It was about an hour later when I stopped, startled by a low muttering sound like the far swell of the sea, that seemed to come up from the eastern horizon. It was a distant cannon shot that betokened the gathering of armies, and, although I knew it not, it was the rumbling thunder of Chancellorsville. I was listening to the opening notes of the great battle.

I passed on, and to the eastward I heard another cannon shot, and then another, and then another. Dim red flashes appeared on the misty horizon, and once I heard the sound of galloping hoofs. I began now to feel an interest that was more than personal. Here were movements of importance, and my flight had taken me among them. There was danger in it, and yet it gave me opportunity, too. Armies gathering for battle would not notice one straggler as he stole through the wilderness.

The sounds in the east grew to a low but steady rumble. I shifted to the westward, that I might pass around this cannonade, but my change of course brought to my ears the thunder of guns in the west too. I was between two fires, and, deciding that it was best for me to go straight ahead, I pushed on, still keeping to the densest of the thickets, the voice of the guns steadily growing louder. Troops began to pass me, and all were of the South. They came so near once that I lay down in the bushes behind a log, and I could understand the words they spoke as they passed by. They

began to sing presently, many hundreds of hoarse voices joining in a chant that was low, rolling, and majestic, and this was the song:

“ We see him now! the old slouched hat  
Cocked o’er his eye askew;  
The shrewd, dry smile, the speech so pat,  
So calm, so blunt, so true.  
The ‘ Blue Light Elder ’ knows o’er well,  
Says he: ‘ That’s Banks, he’s fond of shell;  
Lord save his soul! we’ll give him—’ well,  
That’s Stonewall Jackson’s way.

“ Ah, maiden! wait and watch and yearn  
For news of Stonewall’s band;  
Ah, widows! read with tears that burn  
The ring upon thy hand;  
Ah, wife! sew on, pray on, hope on;  
Thy life shall not be all forlorn;  
The foe had better ne’er been born  
Than get in Stonewall Jackson’s way!”

They passed on, and the song still rang in my ears like an echo.

I lay hidden all the time in the scrub while an entire brigade passed, but as soon as they were out of sight I arose and hastened on with doubled speed, not wishing to be caught within the ring of battle.

I saw troops again moving along a road, and I curved back into the thickets, coming presently to the brow of a low hill, where I lay down among the bushes. The sound of voices, as if in earnest conversation, reached me there, and, crawling to the edge of the hill where I still lay hidden in the thickets, I looked down the slope.

Two men were sitting on empty cracker boxes, talking, and looking occasionally at a paper which I supposed bore a map. The faces of both showed intense interest and preoccupation. A sentinel, gun on shoulder, paced back and forth near them, and three or four

sticks of wood thrown together gave out a fire like a little torch.

I knew those men—one large, imposing, but dressed so neatly; the other smaller, shabby, his face covered with an unkempt black beard. They were the two who had asked me questions in the prison. I was looking at Stonewall Jackson as he planned with Lee his last great battle.

I watched them a little while, full of curiosity, and then I stole away, conscious that my place was not there, and eager to reach the army to which I belonged. I travelled all night, and good fortune went on before me as a guide. I heard continually and on every side of me the low thunder of distant guns, and beheld now and then the flashes on the horizon, but no one saw me as I passed through the Confederate lines.

It was nearly morning when I came to a little brook, and kneeling, drank eagerly. I washed my face then in the cool water, and seeking the nearest thicket, lay down half under a fallen log, where one to see me must first step on me. The distant music of the cannon was still in my ears as I, worn out, fell asleep. It was the same music of the guns that lulled me to deeper slumbers, and when I awoke at midday, the brilliant sun penetrating even the bushes that covered me, the thunder of the cannon was still sounding in my ears.

I ate the last of the food, listening with all my ears and looking with all my eyes. The east was in a red flame, and I knew that the steady roaring was made by many great guns. But, refreshed and strengthened, I passed it by and fled toward Washington. I met on the way, however, some of our broken battalions, learning from them of our great defeat and Stonewall Jackson's death. I reached the capital the day after I heard this news, and enlisted anew as a soldier in the Union cause, being assigned to service, contrary to my wish, however, in the Washington garrison.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### A MAN OF HEART

I HAD been gone from Washington only a year and a half, but I found great changes at the capital. There was an increase in warlike appearance; it was the centre of a circle of bayonets; line after line of intrenchments curved away, and I noticed that most of them faced the south; thousands of troops occupied these, and their tents were more numerous than the houses of the inhabitants. It was soldiers, soldiers everywhere, and the rule of the republic had become the rule of the sword.

Washington was no longer a capital, but it was half camp, half hospital, and huge in either aspect; a hundred and fifty forts encircled it, and fifteen hundred cannon stood sentinel, facing every point from which a foe could come; within the rim of cannon rose the hospitals, and these hospitals, always more to-day than they were yesterday, never went unfilled; the battle-fields of Virginia, so prolific in cannon balls, saw to that, and the current of the wounded flowed northward in an unbroken stream.

Although I knew that I had no right to expect anything else—for, how could the war work otherwise?—this aspect of the capital gave me a shock. I had shared in the Jeffersonian dream of a republic always at peace, and I still believed it a beautiful dream.

Another change in the capital was the disappearance of all things Southern save its sunshine. The tall, thin, smooth-shaven men, in black clothes, coat-tails very long, and wide-brimmed soft black hats, who frequented the hotels and public buildings, and loved to talk politics and government in flowing and soft speech, were gone, and the liquid Southern accent so pleasing to me was seldom heard.

I chafed at my assignment to garrison duty at Washington, wishing to join the Army of the Potomac, and also to secure Elinor's transfer from the capital of the South to the capital of the North, setting my right as her husband against Mrs. Maynard's right as her aunt. But I could not escape the Washington service, and making the best of it, I went at the first opportunity to see Elinor's uncle, Paul Warner, her uncle by marriage, not blood, and therefore with less claim upon her than Mrs. Maynard.

The great double brick house in which Paul Warner lived showed even more numerous signs of splendour and opulence than it boasted at the opening of the war. The way of an army contractor who knew the ways of men was not paved with roses, but with something very much more substantial and welcome—namely, gold dollars; and no one was shrewder in his own business than Paul Warner. There were tales in the army of shoes with pasteboard soles and uniforms that fell to pieces in the winter rains, and I doubted not that Paul Warner could tell some of their secrets; but he was Elinor's uncle nevertheless. He was proud of her and he loved her in his way. He would care for her if I could bring her to Washington.

He looked at me in surprise when he entered the parlour where I was sitting.

"I heard a report somewhere that you had been killed in the West," he said.

"But you see that it is not true," I replied.



"I am glad," he said, and I believe that he spoke the truth. Moreover, he shook hands with me heartily.

"Mr. Warner," I said, "I am happy to tell you that since I last saw you I have become your kinsman."

"My kinsman?"

"Yes, your nephew."

His heavy face stirred with a look of the deepest interest, and then I told him all our long and strange story.

"I did not choose you as my nephew," he said when I finished. "Men seldom choose their relations, whether by blood or marriage, or they might do worse; but since it is done I must accept you, and Elinor is a good girl. Her choice of you is at least in your favour, and she must come to Washington, if a way can be found. But it is an affair for me to conduct. I have more influence than you."

I was willing enough that he should act, but I did not intend to relax my own exertions meanwhile. I was not able, however, to get a message through the lines to Richmond, nor was he, so far as I could hear. But I had the great pleasure, however, of receiving a letter from my grandmother. I had written to her immediately upon my arrival in Washington, telling her the whole history of Elinor and myself, or at least as much as I knew of it, since our flight on the night of our marriage.

"I feel that all things will come out right with you both," said Madam Arlington in conclusion, "but I fear for you, Henry, in that wicked city, among all those Yankees who will certainly suffer the continued defeats that they deserve. It is best that Elinor remain in Richmond amid such inspiring surroundings until the war is over, when you can claim her. Perhaps your action in this war will not then be held against you, and your Southern relatives and friends may be influential

enough to convince all that you were misguided and not wicked. Never fear that Elinor will not be able to take care of herself in Richmond. Women are not so weak and defenceless as men think they are—which belief flatters man's pride in his own strength—although they like to feel that they have protectors within call.

"Our affairs here, by God's will, progress favourably. We have not been annoyed since your departure, either by regular troops or guerrillas. The spring rains were abundant and the crops promise well. I see no change in William Penn; I tell him that he is growing older, but he replies that it is not important. Remember, Henry, in all your campaigning to keep your head cool and your feet warm.

"Your loving grandmother,

"CAROLINE ARLINGTON."

A day or two after the receipt of this letter I met Mason, just come out of hospital from a wound received at Chancellorsville. He gave me news of Shaftoe, who he said had secured a transfer to the Army of the Potomac shortly after Shiloh. The veteran, so Mason told me, was sure that the great theatre of the war was to be in the East, and because of that he wished to come. I was walking along Pennsylvania Avenue only three days after this when a heavy hand fell upon my shoulder, and a loud voice said in my ear:

"As many lives as a cat and swaggering through the town as if you owned it! Is there anything so big as the pride of youth?"

It was Shaftoe, the same trim soldier as of old, gladness showing in his eyes. I shook hands with him with the greatest joy, and when we began to exchange stories I found that he too had been on garrison duty in Washington for a longer period than I. He had fought at Chancellorsville, but had been sent to the

capital with his brigade immediately after the defeat, when it was feared that the Army of Northern Virginia might move on the city.

"And you see I was here when you came," he said with twinkling eyes. "It was strange that I did not hear of your arrival and the mighty re-enforcement it made for our armies; but so it was."

I felt as usual the tonic cheerfulness of his presence. There was something in this man, his quiet confidence, his unfailing optimism—or shall I rather call it a determination to make the best of everything?—that rendered discouragement impossible among those whom he honoured with his friendship; I use the word "honoured" purposely. I told him the entire story of my marriage, our flight and recapture, and my escape from Libby Prison. He was thoughtful, and for a little while made no comment. Then he said:

"I do not think that you have heard the last of Varian. He is one of the best soldiers on American soil to-day. He has every quality that a cavalry commander ought to have. He's been giving us every sort of trouble, but all the same I'm glad he's on their side and not ours. There's a particular kind of man that thinks the world was made for him to squeeze like an orange. If he's beat just once he gets mad at everybody, friends and enemies alike. Now, this General Varian has lost what he wanted most, and the claws will begin to show."

Shaftoe gave me more good advice, and I was confident both of his judgment and his friendship. I managed to procure an exchange into the company to which he belonged, but both of us were held a further period on garrison duty.

While I was waiting I was made a lieutenant, and Shaftoe became a sergeant under me. It seemed a jest to me that this man, who knew twenty times as much about war as I, should be under my command; but he

was kind enough to say that I was as good as the average lieutenant.

I was informed shortly after that I was to keep the last night watch over a deserter who was to be hanged the next day. It was a duty that had none of the flush and glory of war, and though I would have chosen anything else in preference, I knew too much to protest.

The quarters of the condemned man were on a skirt of the city, where the fringe of houses became thin and the tents of the camp rose in lines in the darkness like white ghosts. The deserter had been placed in a tent alone, and, stationing my guard at the entrance and around it, I walked back and forth, often looking from the hillside upon the city which lay almost at my feet, in all its armour, like a mailed knight of old.

It was a warm spring night like that other warm spring night at Shiloh, now more than a year gone, when the Southern army rose out of the darkness like an apparition, and naturally my mind went back to the battle. It seemed to me that the object for which my comrades and I had fought was even more distant now than then. Paraphrasing an old saying, I said to myself that much blood had flowed under the bridge since Shiloh, but its flowing had been to no purpose, so far as I could see.

The city was unrolled like a picture at my feet; the gleam of white in the darkness came from the marble of the Capitol and the cloth walls of tents; a light shining through the foliage marked the White House, and the sombre shapes, almost as dark as the darkness, told where stood the other buildings of the Government. Some built-up street showed dimly, but everywhere, in the city and around it, dominating all things, burned the fires of the army. A vast circle of little flames sprang from forts, hospitals, and camp fires, and their light rising high formed a luminous cloud which floated over the capital and inclosed it in a rosy mist. But I

knew that beneath that mist was the unseen flash of many bayonets, now furnishing the chief light for the peaceful capital of Jefferson.

The night was silent, yet not strangely so; the noisy period of the war, the time for loud talking and the rattling of unused arms, had passed, and men fought, suffered, and waited, without tumult. I heard distinctly my own footsteps as I walked up and down, and presently another's, faint and far away, but approaching. The figure of a man showed dimly through the darkness, and then advanced more clearly into outline. It was the clergyman, come to pay the last visit of consolation to the condemned—tall, old, and kindly. I passed him into the tent and waited without.

The old man remained an hour inside, and when he came out stopped a moment with me.

"A solemn duty for you," he said.

"I could have wished anything else."

"More folly than guilt," continued the clergyman, pointing to the tent.

I thought it very likely, but the military law in such cases was stern and of age-long use. It was approved by none more than by soldiers, and I merely nodded.

"Only a boy," said the clergyman.

"But a boy who is old enough to fight must know the laws of war," I replied.

The clergyman was silent for a few moments, and then he said:

"Seems to have been a case of homesickness."

"There have been too many such. Examples must be made."

He did not reply, and, sighing once, walked away in the darkness.

I resumed my walk, but my mind returned presently to the words of the clergyman and the sympathy of his manner. Examples were needed, undoubtedly;

but if the deserter was only a boy, and homesickness had been the cause of his fall, his fate was hard. Yet the laxity toward such offences had been already too great. I felt much pity for the boy, but I knew that I could not alter his sentence.

"Is the man asleep?" I asked presently of one of the soldiers who stood at the tent flap.

"He must be; he has not stirred in an hour."

A candle was burning in the tent and its dim light fell on the ground without, but the figure of the deserter inside was not revealed. I listened a little while, and not hearing him move, walked on. But I came back presently and entered the tent. The deserter was on my mind.

The candle rested on an empty box, but its light was so feeble that I stood for a few moments, until my eyes grew strong enough for the dusk.

The deserter was sitting on another box, his head sunk between his shoulders, his chin fallen low, his whole form crushed, and his face hopeless; nothing moved except his fingers, which opened and shut automatically against the palms of his hands. He seemed to me a sitting figure of blank and wordless despair. He was not more than eighteen years old.

The boy moved slightly and turned his vacant gaze upon me. He stared at the intruder, not as if I were a man, but as he would have stared at a stone wall, and with as little interest. He neither spoke nor made further movement.

He was an ordinary farm lad; nothing bad in his face, but one who knew that he was going to die, and, knowing it, was dying in advance—a boy who had invited death by thoughtlessness.

Pity rose up in my soul. The lad's silence, his submission, his fearful gaze, as if he expected to see Death approaching him in corporeal and visible form, a genuine old man with the scythe, impressed me with



the terrors of an execution in such a case and the pitiless demands of war. Here was a boy who was neither a thief nor a coward; who, with comrades to right and left, and the battle flame before, would be as brave as any; who was as good as other boys; who loved his father and mother, and whose fault had been merely homesickness, certainly not in itself a crime, and often at other times esteemed a merit and the mark of a true heart. He was to be made a sacrifice for a huge machine, but how was he ever to be paid back? The thought troubled me, and while trying to find a solution I stared unconsciously into the prisoner's eyes, which were looking at me so vacantly.

Then I remembered myself, and, fearing that my presence there was an insult to the boy's dumb fear, I went outside, glad to feel the cool night air on my face again.

The night advanced, and many of the lights died, but enough still burned to stud the city as if with stars. It was just midnight, when I heard an approaching footstep again, and a tall, ungainly man, walking awkwardly, came to the tent.

"I wish to talk to the deserter," he said.

I was about to demand his authority, but, seeing his face and melancholy eyes, took him into the tent without a word, and withdrew.

I waited a long time, hearing occasionally the low murmur of voices inside, but never a loud tone. Though more of the lights in tent and hospital had vanished, the night was not dark. The rosy mist of the fires below, thin but luminous, still floated over the city; the river, a long sinuous band of burnished silver, coiled among the hills; and stone and marble walls shed a white light.

"Walk a little with me, lieutenant. I wish to speak with you."

The tall man had come out of the tent, and I saluted

with deep respect. Instructing my men to keep a good watch, I walked away with my visitor in the indicated path.

"You will return him to his regiment in the morning, and tell him that a double obligation to be a good and true soldier now rests upon him," said the tall man, pointing over his shoulder toward the tent in which the deserter sat.

"But the execution!" I exclaimed in surprise.

"There will be no execution."

"But he is a deserter; it is the law of war and a necessity."

"He is a deserter, and it is the law of war, but it is not a necessity; no such execution shall occur while I am President. I will pardon every offender. Look!"

He pointed to the city that lay below and the wide sweep of lights gleaming from hospital and tent.

"Can not we kill enough men on the battlefield?" he continued, the deep, melancholy eyes lighting up. "The hospitals there are full of the wounded; the dead are taken out every day, and the tents are crowded with men getting ready to furnish more dead and wounded. It is my business to make war by wholesale, and I shall not turn aside from it to kill a few poor lads of our own army in Washington."

Then we were silent for a little while, and I watched the face of that strange man which seemed to have in it some of the prophetic light possessed by the seers and fearless preachers of the Western woods. Then the eyes began to twinkle, and another phase of his character appeared.

"You are a Kentuckian?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I thought so. One can not mistake that accent, the haughty snubbing of the poor little letter 'r,' and the general air of a speaking acquaintance with God."

"In Kentucky we are as good as anybody, and that accounts for our manner."

"I do not criticise it; how could I? I am a Kentuckian by birth and family stock, and so is Davis, who is now at the head of those down there."

He waved his hands toward the South.

"The Kentuckian is always a problem to me," he continued, "and none the less so because I am one myself; sometimes I think he is not an American at all, but just a Kentuckian, which perhaps includes the American character, but also gives something above and beyond. I do not know whether to consider his State a projection of the North into the South, or a projection of the South into the North; whether to rank the Kentuckians as Southerners turned Northerners, or Northerners turned Southerners, or perhaps a compromise, or a mixture, containing much of one and a little of the other, or much of the other and a little of the one."

He stopped and looked inquiringly at me.

"We are what we are," I said with pride.

The President laughed.

"So are most other people," he continued; "besides, your claim is not wholly original, though it sounds well enough. Another Kentuckian whom I heard make the claim in almost the same language had never walked on a carpet in his life. He lived in a log hut, and he could not read, but he was just as sincere as you, and perhaps as much justified. When he knocks at the heavenly gates and St. Peter asks him what good he has done, he will not mention anything, but say, 'I am from Kentucky,' and push right in."

"It ought to count," I said.

The President laughed again.

"You thought you were jesting then," he said, "but you were not. Do you know why that man was proud of being a Kentuckian? Do you know why all Kentuckians are? It is not because Kentucky is the most

beautiful and most fertile State in the Union—for it is neither; not because it has the most glorious history—for it has not; not because it is the most advanced and enlightened of the States—for it is not, and you know it as well as I. Then why?”

“‘Lives there a man with soul so dead,’” I quoted.

“It is that in part only, but when you get through with man’s pride in his literature, his art, his good laws, his industry, and his justice to other people and himself, you find down at the bottom the solid bed-rock upon which all rests—his pride in his fighting ability. I do not say that it ought to be so, but it is so. I knew an old revivalist preacher out in Illinois, a genuinely good man, and the only man I ever met who could really forgive his enemies; but if you were to intimate to him that an American army could not whip an equal army of any other nation, you would have him to fight; yet he truly described himself as a humble follower of Christ. That is the temper of you Kentuckians; you are always fighting, and in your hearts you are proud of it. You are afraid that when you get to heaven no fighting will be allowed there, and you are trying to get enough of it here.”

“Look at our history,” I said in defence. “We had to fight from necessity and not from choice. Was not Kentucky the Dark and Bloody Ground? Even before the white men came we had to fight the Indians for twenty years; then we fought all the way from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico in the second war with Great Britain, and then in more Indian wars in the Northwest. The fighting man got to be considered the most valuable person among us, and the feeling has been handed on. Besides, we have it in our blood, by fair inheritance: we are mostly descended from the Scotch, and I have never read of anybody who fought more and with more enjoyment than the Scotch. How could we escape the fighting feeling? We are not neglecting our

part in this war, either. Eighty thousand of us in the Northern army, forty thousand in the Southern; and there are only a little more than a million people in the State—men, women, and children, counting the blacks—who don't take part."

"You have said several things with pride, but that last sentence with more pride than any other. You would rather be thought a fool or a villain than a coward."

The President ceased to jest and was silent, the melancholy look habitual with him deepening. I took advantage of the opportunity to ask him for active service, and he replied with some significance that he thought the chance would come soon; then he bade me a fatherly good night, and walked away in the darkness.

I watched his figure until it disappeared, and I thought that this strange man was truly alone in the darkness in more senses than one. He seemed to have scarcely a friend just now. All cried out against him, because the war was not going well.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE HERALDS OF LEE

I SOUGHT again, but as before without success, to obtain news of Elinor, and Paul Warner told me that he too had failed repeatedly. I prepared for another effort to secure a transfer, but all such attempts were set at naught suddenly by a great piece of news.

The Army of Northern Virginia was advancing, and the forces of Lee were invading the North. The South, instead of fighting on the defensive, instead of seeking to protect her own borders, was striking straight at the heart of the North, and striking with all the might of a strong arm. The invaded had become the invader. The march of Lee would cut the East from the West, and he would threaten in turn the great cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. The peril was sudden and great, and whatever Grant might do in the West would be of no avail if Lee won. That was the palpable and terrible issue which the North must face.

Both fact and rumour were the heralds of Lee. The Army of Northern Virginia that he led seemed invincible. It stood in the record of its victories with the armies of Frederick the Great and Napoleon. A leader of genius, surrounded by brilliant lieutenants, led brave, skilful, and enduring men—men who had grown up in the open air, tall, big-boned, broad-chested men, whom no hardship could kill or even disable. They were



Southerners only because their States lay farther south than those of the North, not real Southerners like the Spaniards or Italians, but men who were accustomed to a long and severe winter, and all the extremes of heat and cold.

Sure and terrible evidences of Lee's advance had come already. The army of Milroy, in the Valley of Virginia, was attacked suddenly by an overwhelming Southern division and cut to pieces, annihilated at a blow; the few fugitives who escaped from the field spread the alarm throughout the North, even to Philadelphia and New York. No man could doubt, in the face of such evidence.

Cavalry fighting between the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac had been going on for some time, and the clash of sabres came over the hills, but none knew Lee's precise intentions. There were many points at which he could strike, but neither our generals nor our Government at Washington could guess his choice, and they must wait in suspense. The cavalry combats continued, and then it became known suddenly that Lee had slipped away from Hooker, that the Army of Northern Virginia, larger and better equipped than ever before in its history, and more able to deliver a decisive blow, was marching straight into the North, with the Army of the Potomac behind it, and no barrier in front. Rumour and fact together gave the numbers of Lee's army: rumour said that he led one hundred and fifty thousand men; fact put it at eighty thousand, veterans all.

Fact, too, brought to Washington a singular and striking incident, in which many people saw a deep significance, at a time when the mind naturally turned to omens and forecasts. Before beginning the northward march, the gray and silent commander of the Southern army had yielded to the request of his brilliant cavalry leader, Stuart, to review his command. The spectacle

was held in a wide plain in Virginia, and Lee and his staff sat on their horses under the shade of an oak tree, while the ten thousand horsemen, born to the saddle and incomparable riders long before the war began, led by Stuart himself, galloped before him, wheeling, charging, retreating, and executing all the movements of battle. Nor were the noise and flash of real war absent, for cannon thundered, rifles rattled, and the blaze and smoke of burned gunpowder ran over the plain. Through this smoke and blaze, and to the song of the guns, galloped the ten thousand wild horsemen.

Men saw in this mimic battle a surplus of energy, an overflow of enthusiasm and spirits, which would now be turned in full flood upon the North.

It was an age of telegraphs, and knowledge was quick. All saw that the crisis of the republic had come. It was said at first that Washington itself was about to be attacked, but this fear soon passed. The capital was safe within its ring of one hundred and fifty forts and fifteen hundred guns. Thirty-six thousand good troops stood behind these works, and fifteen thousand more were within call. No army in existence could force such ramparts, so defended.

I saw that my private affairs were likely to suffer at such a time, but a soldier must turn his whole mind to his duty, and with Shaftoe I sought again for active service. We were accepted promptly, and were sent northwestward with some Pennsylvania cavalry to look for the Army of Northern Virginia.

As we rode, the whole nation was in an agony of apprehension. The Army of Northern Virginia, that terrible sword wielded by the hand of the terrible swordsman Lee, had suddenly reproduced itself in many places. It was no longer one army, but three, four, five. It had cut to pieces the Union forces in the Valley of Virginia; it was marching through the defiles of the mountains; it had been seen in Maryland; it was

already among the hills of Pennsylvania; public report put it everywhere, and could give it a definite place nowhere. Then the question became, "Where, in fact, is the Army of Northern Virginia?" The report that Lee was advancing, but now definite and confirmed again and again, and was about to strike his greatest blow, was carried instantly to all the myriad points reached by the electric wire, and from these were passed on by word of mouth to every farmhouse, however remote; the wires clicked it off in New York and Boston and St. Louis and Chicago; the smaller cities heard it a minute afterward, and the next day they were talking of it in the towns and villages; and a week later couriers were carrying it over the great plains and into the valleys of the Rocky Mountains.

But none yet knew where Lee would strike. He was steadily marching northward, drawing in his long lines and concentrating his army; now he was in Maryland, passing over the old field of Antietam, and Ewell, with his vanguard, had been seen among the Pennsylvania towns. The Southern army trod for the first time the soil of a free State.

The Army of the Potomac knew its enemy, and, beaten army though it had been so often, moved on again to the conflict, courage unshaken and hope flaming anew, detaching three corps to cover Washington, and marching with the other seven on a line almost parallel with its foe. The two armies were now passing down the sides of a triangle, with some point as yet unknown to be their place of meeting. The Northern army crossed the Potomac on bridges of boats and marched on, now but forty miles from its Southern enemy, watchful, its scouts everywhere, and preparing itself daily for the struggle that it knew must be. The time was the close of June and rainy, heavy storms coming now and then and deluging the earth. The roads were deep in mud, warm vapours hung over the land, and the

air was close and sultry. The vegetation, thriving under the rain, was thick and heavy, and the earth put on its deepest green. But through storms and over green grass alike the two foes marched, watching, silent, defiant, two hundred thousand men expecting battle, and eager for it; now one, now the other disappearing from the knowledge of those who followed so eagerly their movements. Swarms of cavalry and skirmishers hung upon the flanks of each, meeting in frequent combats, always fierce, and sometimes rising in numbers to the dignity of important battles. The cavalry of the North held its own for the first time with the lifelong riders of the South, and the tales of these sanguinary struggles, as the wires clicked them off, prepared the minds of men for the final test by the two armies that marched on and seemed not to regard the incessant side play of the wild horsemen who clung on their skirts like a fringe.

But I was not thinking so much of the waiting nation, as I galloped northward with my new commander, as I was of Elinor in Richmond, and those whose life touched mine. The memory of a woman's face, and that long, happy ride over the mountains, were oftenest with me. One can rarely sink one's own personal hopes and fears into those of the nation.

We were approaching Pennsylvania, and soon we entered this State of a comfortable population. I noticed with deep interest the signs of thrift and wealth: the rich soil, the solid houses, the huge barns, the fat cattle; a country hitherto sheltered, men going on with their work as if there were no war, everything so different from the battle-worn and battle-torn South, nearly every square mile of which had already felt the tramp of armies. I appreciated more than ever the difference in resources and the gigantic character of the task that the South, with so little thought of its magnitude, had set herself.

The alarm of the people increased as we rode farther

north. Beyond a doubt the Southern troops were in Pennsylvania, for now we met men who had seen them, who told of their squadrons, their passage through this or that town, how they crossed rivers and mountains, and had yet found nothing to oppose them. We rode at last into Harrisburg, the capital of the State, where we found excitement and confusion supreme, and, looking at the opposite shore of the river, I saw there horsemen, whose easy swing and graceful seat betokened the cavalry of the South.

"It's Ewell's command," said Shaftoe. "We'll have an argument with 'em—but later, not here."

Ewell's men contented themselves with a look at Harrisburg, and then turned back to the south to join the main army under Lee, apparently content to return and take the city at their leisure.

The command to which we belonged also turned southward.

"I take it that we're scouts and skirmishers on a large scale," said the regular.

"It suits me well enough," I replied.

"Me too," said Shaftoe.

We entered the next day a country of deep, rich soil, broken by steep, high, and rocky ridges, and great masses of rock that looked like ruined castles or fantastic pyramids; at the foot of these stone upheavals flowed small, swift streams of clear water, and in the valleys were wheat fields turning golden under the sun. The natural fortresses and the rich fields below formed a striking contrast, the fertility and sternness of Nature showing side by side. But it was a neat and thrifty land of brick houses and stone fences and prosperous farmer people, all built on the square and solid plan.

The day was more pleasant than usual; the rain was not falling and the ground was drying up; a west wind blew the vapours away, and the soldiers felt brisk and strong. We rode to the summit of one of the lower

ridges, and I saw a fine little town outspread below—a town of red-brick houses, with a dome or a cupola shining here and there in the sun, and wheat fields on its outskirts. Great, gaunt crags of gray stone rose up more than two hundred feet from some of the hills about, and a stream near by flowed between steep banks, in places almost as high; in the side of one hill frowned a huge gash like a lion's mouth.

"What town is that?" I asked of the man by my side, a Pennsylvanian.

"Gettysburg."

"Gettysburg! I never heard of it."

It lay below us, asleep in the sunshine, without a history, and content.

But I gazed little at this unknown town of Gettysburg, which looked to me like so many of its fellows in Pennsylvania, and not worthy of special attention at this time. No feature of it was impressed upon me, and it was not in my thoughts that I would ever see it again. A few minutes later our commander turned once more to the south, mid-morning not yet having come. But our long ride and scout ended an hour afterward, when we met an advance guard of more than four thousand Northern troops, under Buford, marching toward Gettysburg.

"They'll take us with them," said Shaftoe, with sure instinct or judgment.

And so they did; the little command was merged at once into the larger, and we returned on our own trail toward the forgotten little town that we had left an hour ago.

"I'm thinking that we may have a skirmish if we march far enough—that is, if the Johnny Rebs will wait for us," said Shaftoe reflectively, and then he added, "They've a habit of waiting for us when they're wanted."

The sun shone in splendour, gilding stony crags



and dark oak forests, and falling like golden gauze across the green of meadow and foliage; the last vapour disappeared, the dews of recent rains dried up, and the grass nodded to the gentle west wind. My spirits were high; the old Kentucky blood in my veins was singing; I liked this swift campaigning, the ride over hill and through forest, with the air rushing past. We would reach Gettysburg before noon, rest and eat there, and then we would ride on in search of the main body of the Army of Northern Virginia, with a great battle to follow, somewhere within a week or two.

The advance was without talk. I noted this fact. I noted, too, how different in manner the soldiers were from those who had marched to Shiloh; these men had become veterans, making few complaints, enduring their hardships in silence because they knew that war was not a parade; a rugged, big-boned, brown-faced, lean-bodied division of four thousand or more, the counterpart of many other divisions that now marched and fought for North and South, dusty and bedraggled, but wonderfully bold and skilful at their trade.

Shaftoe caught my eye as it ran over the brigade of silent men, and he understood.

"Yes, Henry," he said, "they are soldiers now. There ought to be some pretty work when the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia meet."

I was sure that the death roll would be large enough.

The sun beat down on the toiling brigade, and the air grew close and heavy once more, but no murmur arose. I heard only the clank of arms, the straining of gear, the beat of horses' hoofs, and the breathing of four thousand men. The road was deep in mud and hard for travel. Yet there was no murmur.

We were approaching Gettysburg again, and through the clefts between the hills we saw the spires and cupolas of the town shining in the sun. Shaftoe, on my

right, was examining the ground with a practised eye; the veteran's gaze passed over the rugged slopes of Little Round Top, Cemetery Hill and Seminary Ridge; followed the steep and lofty banks of Rock Creek; all a little wilderness of hill and valley, of gray-stone fortresses built by Nature, darkened here and there with patches of knotty oaks, while farther on the gold of the wheat fields refreshed the eye. Yet it looked peaceful then; the sombre hills, upon which the shadows lay despite the risen sun, the oak groves hanging like black patches on the slopes, and the town beyond glittering redly in the brilliant day. There was majesty in those silent hills, the creek flowing silently in its deep ravine, and the quiet old town enjoying another day in its monotonous and unknown existence.

A scout on horseback galloped up, a trumpet blew, arms rattled, and our four thousand formed in closer rank. Some one else was approaching the town, coming from the other side, and seeking its hospitality, though not likely to be so welcome. It was a body of Southern troops, scouting or foraging, and one of those chance meetings of cavalry now so frequent seemed about to occur.

I was sorry; it disturbed the morning of a beautiful day, and I wished to continue the search for the Army of Northern Virginia.

The sound of two or three distant rifle shots came vaguely, and then an officer announced that there would be no fight, the Southerners, who were inferior in force, having retired. We resumed our march and entered Gettysburg.

The townspeople, a solid, strong race, received us with joy, having been somewhat surprised at the approach of rival guests from opposite sides, but disposed to give due credit for courtesy to the Southerners who had reached their suburbs in a search for shoes, so it was now said, which would indicate that these same

men were expecting long marches. There was nothing picturesque in their projected invasion of Gettysburg; it was merely a commercial affair; the shoes were to be paid for, and that, no doubt, would have been the end of it, had not chance brought Buford and his men before the bargain could be begun—an historical interruption.

But these people of Gettysburg were intensely loyal to the Union and glad to see their own, whom they made welcome by both word and deed, offering to us what the town afforded. There the division lingered, much to my surprise, as I could see no reason why so much time should be passed in such an unimportant town, when the weather was good for marching, and the Army of Northern Virginia was to be found.

We ate dinner, waited through all the afternoon, asking no questions, but waiting. The shadows came in the west and the sun went down, dyeing the sombre hills and crags a deep red as it went, and then leaving them in darkness. The pickets were set around the town and along all the roads that centred there. Scouting parties were sent out to watch the retreating Southerners, for one could never tell what those amazing gentlemen might do. A strong detachment was posted in the country north of the town, another to the west, and those of the division not actually on duty were free to seek their rest. Nearly all were untroubled, save the uneasy general, whose uneasiness was wisdom.

But the people of the town stayed up late that night; it had not been a habit with them to entertain armies. Moreover, their guests would probably depart the next day, and therefore should be treated well during their brief stay, as if welcome—as they truly were. It was the small part in the war that Gettysburg owed, and she would discharge the debt, throwing in as much as she could for good count and interest.

That same night the garrulous wires were clicking.

Two armies were lost, and the man who could find them would be great among his fellows. Lee was near a little Pennsylvania town called Gettysburg, and the Army of the Potomac, under Meade, who had suddenly replaced Hooker, after the Northern fashion of changing generals at a critical moment, was scattered somewhere to the south and east of that town. But these were merely vague statements. People wanted more exact information. There was a great hunting up and examination of old maps, from New York and Philadelphia to villages in Maine and Minnesota, and as the seekers traced roads with forefingers, some inquired about this little town of Gettysburg, of which they had heard for the first time. Still it attracted only trifling interest, and the few who noticed it merely put it down as one of those quiet places which achieve a twelve hours' fame as a way station of an army, and then are forgotten.

These maps, which could tell them nothing, were shut up in disgust long before the night was over, and though the wires still clicked volubly, carrying questions and unsatisfactory answers, the wiser concluded that it was time to go to bed and wait for another day's reports of skirmishes and cavalry combats, indecisive and signifying nothing, hoping that some time or other definite news would come out of this cloudland.

Shaftoe and I were not on duty, and soldierly wisdom told us that the proper thing to do after a long day's work was to sleep the sleep of the tired; but neither of us felt like closing his eyes. I found fault with my wakefulness, but it was in the air and I could not help it. The night was close and hot, and we wandered through the little city, watching the lights that burned in nearly every window. The solid, sober population, still appreciating the visit, kept awake to see its guests.

Camp fires shone redly on three sides of the town, but the hills were unlighted. I looked up at the som-

bre' ridges, the masses of craggy gray stone, and the dwarfed and gnarled oak groves. The moonlight fell upon them presently and traced fantastic shapes over rock and tree, earth and stream. The likeness of the hills to ancient castles grew stronger, and a moonbeam across some streak of reddish stone shone like a light at a window.

"This is the North," I said.

"Yes, Henry," replied Shaftoe, "and it's a long way from here to Shiloh. The war swings over a wide circuit."

We entered presently a little hotel, in which several men of the town were deciding the location and fate of the battle that was to be, gravely assisting their deliberations with smoke and something to drink. We sat down at one side and took no part in the talk, listening with the amusement and vast superiority that soldiers feel in the presence of civilians who discuss soldierly matters. One civilian, for the honour of the army, offered the two soldiers beer, a liquid which I had seldom tasted, thinking it bitter and bad. But I drank a little to show that there was good feeling, and then I leaned back with my head against the wall.

"I tell you the battle will be fought there at Harrisburg," said a fat citizen, smiting the capital with a long forefinger.

"Why?"

"It's the capital of the State, and of course the rebels will try to take it—moral effect, you know. We defend, and there is a battle."

"Nonsense! Why should the rebels waste themselves on a little place like Harrisburg? Lee is too smart for that; Philadelphia is his size. The big battle will be fought there, sure."

The military campaign across the old map became spirited and soon rose to the dignity of pins. A big, black-headed pin represented Lee and another Meade,

but wherever they were stuck there they abode but little, moving on to new places and performing strange evolutions not described in the technical books. Each had his opinion as to the place of battle, all selecting a spot, and all different, but never a one chose Gettysburg. Failing to agree, they appealed at last to us for a decision, but we said we did not know, and rising, walked out again into the air.

"It is time for us to go home," said some of the men following us.

I vaguely heard them making plans for to-morrow's work when the soldiers were gone; one on a stone fence, another on a barn, and a third on something else.

"How quiet it is to-night!" I said at length.

"Yes," replied Shaftoe; "sleepy town, sleepy night. Everybody is going to sleep that can, and those that can't, wish they could. As we can, it's not worth while to waste more time awake."

I looked up once more at the hills now turning to silver in the moonlight, and then went away with Shaftoe to our quarters, where I slept well.



## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE PRICE OF SHOES

I AROSE early the next morning and saw the dawn of a close, heavy day, the hot, sticky air oppressing lungs and brain alike. Broad, dark clouds hung over the long line of South Mountain, which shut out the western horizon like a wall. Scattered rays of the rising sun shot through the mists and vapours, and fell in beams of light across the town of Gettysburg and the sombre hills beyond. The walls of the houses shed damp heat.

"Only three days to the Fourth of July," I said to Shaftoe.

"Yes, Henry," he replied; "and I wonder how many more Fourths of July this country will have?"

I glanced quickly at him, but Shaftoe changed in a moment to his customary cheerful manner.

"To breakfast!" said he in light tones. "There is one thing that you must learn to do in war: always get your meals—regular if you can, irregular if you must. The same rule holds in peace, so I guess it will stand acknowledged by all men good and true."

The sun swung slowly up, its rays fighting a way through the resisting clouds which still lent a dark gray tinge to the sky. They hung over South Mountain in close columns, and beneath them the line of the ridge looked sharp and threatening.

The minuteness of preparations begun the day before, and carried on through the night, was continued, the officers permitting no stop or slackening. More cavalry were dismounted and posted along the slopes of the creek called Willoughby Run, some in ambush, Shaftoe and I among them. Others were placed fifty yards behind us in an unfinished railroad cut, and behind these artillery. The four thousand two hundred men of Buford's command were falling into the places assigned to them by this able and far-seeing leader, who was executing plans thought out the night before, the soldiers themselves knowing nothing, but going to their work with the silent obedience that the war had taught them.

"I didn't think the Southerners would return," I said; "those here yesterday were too few to fight us."

"Maybe one of the rebels has gone back for his brother," replied Shaftoe.

"Perhaps."

"I guess he wants a pair of shoes," said some one, referring to the reported cause of the first Southern visit to Gettysburg.

"Then we'll try to fit him," said another, with a laugh.

"It takes a mighty good shoemaker to give the rebel an exact fit," said Shaftoe, shaking his head.

These men—old soldiers they were now, veterans of thirty battles and a hundred skirmishes, though few were out of their twenties, and some had not yet reached them—were calm and cheerful, not seeking to settle the future before its time. They knew perfectly well that they might not live more than a few hours longer, though the fact was not present to their minds, long knowledge having made it stale, but if they had considered the question it would not have troubled them; it was not important.

"Look at that flash," said Shaftoe, pointing to the

northwest and far out on the Cashtown road, one of the many roads that met or crossed at Gettysburg.

"What seest thou, Sister Anna?" I asked.

"Something much more dangerous than Bluebeard," said Shaftoe; "that little flash came from a brilliant sunbeam striking on a bayonet. The bayonet belongs to one of a body of marching men, and those marching men are the Southern troops coming to hold a debate with us."

"We can agree on a topic," I said.

"But we can't tell who'll have the better arguments," replied Shaftoe.

The flash of steel reappeared, but closer to Gettysburg, and then another, and then a sheaf like the sunlight breaking on distant waves. The flashes doubled and redoubled, passing from bayonet tip to tip, and the men and horses came from the gray wall of the horizon; they advanced and their figures grew more distinct; other lines of men stepped out of the gray wall and followed their leaders with regular tread.

"A heavy column—much heavier than ours," said Shaftoe.

It seemed that the rebel had in truth gone back for his brother, and that he was one of a large family.

Some of the cavalymen breathed hard; the horses pulled at their reins; the close, vaporous air infolded us; all talk ceased, and we heard the distant tread of the Southern troops blending with the faint rumble of their artillery. A rifle cracked, and a little puff of smoke, tinted blue in the cloudy air, rose among some trees beside the road.

"A skirmisher! Snaky devils!" said Shaftoe. "Listen; there goes one of ours, too!"

An answering rifle shot came from another wood, and up went the second puff of smoke. The echo sped among the hills.

"Don't you wish that you could follow all the bul-

lets fired in a big battle, and tell just what each one did?" asked a boy of Shaftoe.

"Nonsense! Why do you ask such fool questions? I'd rather not know; I don't even want to know about my own," replied the veteran. "Listen at those skirmishers! There they go again!"

A third and a fourth, and then a dozen rifle shots followed, sounding like the popping of firecrackers, and with nothing to do of my own, I listened for the sounds and looked for the little spurts of flame among the trees or undergrowth, trying, too, to guess where the next would appear.

I watched with interest the play of flame and smoke from the rifle shots, the little stream of red and the puff of white alternating in such picturesque fashion; the crackling of the rifle shots, now increasing fast, was not unpleasant, being rather musical at the distance, and the forms of the skirmishers appeared momentarily, flitting from tree to tree and rock to rock in search of cover as they advanced, and as active as if made of rubber.

The skirmishers hung in clouds on either flank of the advancing column, and in front, covering it on three sides, displaying a pernicious activity, running and creeping among the undergrowth and inequalities of the earth, their brown, fierce faces showing at times, and then gone again like ghosts, their rifles cracking so often that the reports became an incessant tattoo, while the little leaden messengers whistled as they sped through the air on their mission. The great column which they protected, and around which they skirmished with such vigour and activity, advanced steadily and without shouting. I saw it clearly now, a solid body of many thousand men, with formidable artillery, and I looked anxiously at the smaller force that held the Northern lines and awaited the attack. Still, there was no note of battle save the incessant flitting and firing

of the skirmishers, who in their activity seemed to be made of flexible steel, and as heartless. But from the main body, advancing in such steady fashion, came no cannon or rifle shot.

The clouds cleared away somewhat; the vapours were sucked up by the sun, and the blue grew in the sky; the smoke of the skirmishers gathered in little white clouds or drifted off in patches toward the horizon.

I was struck by the difference between this day and Shiloh, where the Southern army sprang suddenly out of the woods and darkness, as if summoned up by a magician's hand, and the battle had begun in the flash of a moment, while here it was a deliberate approach in the open day, with most of the waiting-combatants looking on, as if at a spectacle; nor was this difference in manner greater than the difference between the soldiers of Shiloh and Gettysburg—the raw, untrained, and ignorant armies that fought with such courage and endurance on the banks of the Tennessee, and these grim veterans who took their ease and waited until the battle should surge to their feet and draw them into it.

“Those sharpshooters are hot little fellows to-day,” said Shaftoe in a judicial tone; “see how they skip and jump! A sharpshooter is the only man who gets any real fun out of a battle. He’s a hunter after his game, and the smoke of his own gun goes up his nose until it makes him mad for blood. There’s a special hell for sharpshooters, you know.”

The fire of the skirmishers increased; they pressed forward in swarms, the rapid flash of their rifles made a line of flame, and the smoke drifted back over the heads of the creeping marksmen. The massive Confederate column came nearer and nearer, and the drift of idle talk floating in the last minute or two up and down the line of dismounted horsemen with which Shaftoe and I stood, ceased, the men clutching their

carbines more tightly and drawing deep breaths, as if they would fill their chests for a supreme effort. We were hidden from the approaching enemy by the nature of the ground, and I saw that it would rest with us to open the real battle, an honour and a danger which we took calmly as became veterans.

Our ambushed cavalry, good marksmen, poured a volley at convenient range into the advancing gray Southern mass, choosing the buttons on their breasts as targets, and firing so close together that there was but one crash.

"Now for work!" exclaimed Shaftoe, reloading his carbine with a swift and practised hand.

The answering report came from the Southern line, descending the slopes of Willoughby Run, and some of our cavalymen would ride no more; then our carbines were emptied a second time, and in a moment we were in a battle whose two lines of fire steadily swung nearer and nearer, while the men with thinning ranks and sweating hands, clasping hot gun-barrels, reloaded swiftly and discharged with deadly aim. But the Southern line came on, the faces of the men showing through the drifting smoke, and the flame of their volleys going before.

"What are they doing behind us? Why don't they help?" cried Shaftoe.

"They are helping. Don't you hear?" I answered.

The mounted horsemen in our rear were firing over our heads into the Southern column, and behind them all the great guns of the battery had begun to speak in tones most welcome to those who stood in the first rank and felt the pressure of the foe.

The Southern lines were rising and falling like irregular waves on the slopes of Willoughby Run, but did not flinch before the fire of the veteran troops who faced them. The combat became murderous to the last degree, and the crash of the rifles and the roar of



the guns were unbroken. The Southerners had the advantage of numbers, we of position and the defensive. Buford, our general, watching from a lofty position, saw more long columns of men approaching on the roads from the northwest, and though it was too far to discern either uniform or flag, he knew that these could be only the brigades of the enemy, fresh troops coming to the help of their comrades. Our men refused to give ground, although our ranks were torn by the fire of the artillery and carbines; and the constant closing up of the squares after the passage of bullets and cannon balls through human flesh and bones, like the shutting up of an accordion as the air goes out of it, was fast reducing our army from a fair-sized to a small one.

But help was coming for us too. An officer in the belfry of the seminary beheld a column of dust in the southeast; the heads of men presently emerged from the cloud, and Buford himself climbed into the belfry to see who might come from that friendly quarter. It was Reynolds with his division, and now, by right of seniority, he became commander of the field.

We still held the ground, though at a cost we were not yet able to count, our foes giving no time for enumerations, and we were too tired to cheer the fresh troops which now came in sight, pressed on by messengers from Reynolds to hurry.

“Help at last!” I cried.

“Yes, help at last!” said Shaftoe, “but it only means a bigger battle! Look how the enemy gather! Flies never flew to a lump of sugar faster than they are coming!”

The lines of Southern troops issuing from the western horizon seemed endless. The battle but deepened; it was reaching out, widening its circle, extending long arms and bringing new regiments and brigades within its grasp.

Reynolds was leading a column on the Cashtown

road to cut off the enemy when he saw disaster befall our centre and the triumphant Southern troops seize a wood at the end of the slope, from the shelter of which they poured deadly volleys. Always quick to see and equally quick to execute, this general, who had but ten minutes more to live, prepared to make those minutes of the utmost service to his country. Placing himself at the head of a command which had won and deserved the name of the Iron Brigade, he led it against the wood, the men breaking into a run and rushing on with their general. A bullet struck the brave Reynolds in the centre of the forehead and he died without a word, but the Iron Brigade, preserving the fire and dash that had given to it its name, swept into the wood and fell on the Southern troops there, annihilating them.

Three hours from the beginning of the battle Fortune, which was never more fickle than on that day, changed again and chose us as the object of her ardent but temporary worship. Doubleday, a new Northern general, and by right of seniority the third to take command of the whole field, arrived with fresh troops and regained lost ground. Heth, the Confederate leader, hurried forward his men not yet in the battle.

The character of Gettysburg as a magnet, the obscure little place developing so suddenly its hidden power, grew upon it with the day. Noon came, many thousand men had marched into it, and many thousand more were converging upon a town of which the majority had never heard before, brought there without intent, and by the original desire of the Southern troops to obtain some shoes—the modern world's greatest battle built upon the basis of a pair of cheap shoes!

"They've made the fighting as fast as a man can stand it," I said, when the combat shifted away from us for the moment.

"Yes," replied Shaftoe, "and while we've been busy here the battle's been growing without us. Look!"

He swept his hand in a circle, and everywhere it pointed to fire and smoke, and from every point came the crash of the combat—the long, steady roll of rifles and artillery, a deep and blended note.

“We are enveloped by the enemy!” I exclaimed.

“And our friends also,” added Shaftoe. “Let ’em fight. Our time will come again soon enough. But for the present I’m going to dine.”

“Dine! What on?”

“Not on cannon balls, my gay cocksparrow. I’ll take a chew of tobacco. Tobacco chewing has been called a filthy habit, and I believe it meets with the disapproval of foreign travellers, who write books about our country and don’t know their own; but as it gives me mental, physical, and moral sustenance—all good things in their way—I’ll indulge, while you, who don’t chew, will have to comfort yourself with air, of which there is a bountiful supply and no charge.”

Having delivered this long speech, he bit a piece of tobacco from a huge twist that he produced from his pocket and chewed in great contentment, meanwhile looking philosophically over the field.

“Battle is going against us,” he said presently.

“Why, I thought that we were winning,” I exclaimed in great surprise.

“I wouldn’t have said it was going against us if you had been a new soldier, but you are an old one now, and the difference between an old and a new one is that an old one can stand truth, when it’s bad, and a new one can’t, always. Look how the rebels charge! See what a spring they have! and see how our men pant! They’ll be shoving us back soon. If the South seceded like a woman, she certainly fights like a man; besides, I think their men are arriving faster than ours. Can’t you see them coming upon those roads out of the west and northwest?”

“There is such a thick cloud of fire and smoke that

I can see through it but dimly; yet I can catch now and then the flash of bayonets and a glimpse of marching columns."

"Yes, they come and never stop coming," said Shaf-toe, more to himself than to me. "Carbines now! Here's our own corner of the battle booming up again."

The combat which had sunk at only one or two points, and for but a few moments, embraced us all once more. The Southerners advanced, in force imposing and with a determination yet more imposing, the fire of their own Southern sun shining in their eyes. Heth had gathered his broken brigades and cemented them together with new men; the battle, so strange in its beginning and so remarkable in its steady growth of volume and intensity, was about to assume another and greater phase.

As the Southern troops advanced, both sides opened with all the guns, great and small, that they could bring to bear, and the combat swelled afresh.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE BUCKTAILS GROW ANGRY

THE renewed attack of the Southern army was made with greatest violence on our right wing, where stood a brigade of remarkable men, Pennsylvanians, who proudly called themselves the "Bucktails"; that was their martial device, an emblem of honour, and the name meant as much to them as any banner or inscription ever carried by a body of troops with a standing of centuries, and a commensurate pride in their ancient honour. The brigade had never existed before these men were born, but they had been fighting all their lives—not in war, but in a calling with almost equal hardships and dangers. They were a regiment of giants, lumbermen from the wild hill and mountain regions of Pennsylvania, tall, far beyond the average of men, huge of chest and limb, with faces seamed by heat and cold, rain and sleet, hawk eyes, great knotted fingers, the strength of a bull and the digestion of a bear, born in the wilderness and living there by choice, sleeping oftener under the sky than a roof—men who would stand for a day to their armpits in icy water, guiding ten-ton logs down a rocky channel, and joke about the incessant risk of being crushed to death. It was men like these who could go into war as a relief from the hard duties of their daily calling, and such were the Bucktails.

It was behind these that a few remnants of the dis-

mounted cavalry, Shaftoe and I among them, who had been defending the railroad cut, took refuge, and sought a little breathing spell before entering the battle anew.

When the Southern wave gathered itself again and came on, its crest a ribbon of steel and fire, the Bucktails rose from the ground where they had been taking a moment's rest and regarded the enemy with calm and impartial contemplation; they had eaten like giants, and they stood up rows of giants, expanding their chests, stretching their muscles, rejoicing in their strength, and unafraid.

The Bucktails were in a good humour, an exceedingly good humour. They had been camping and marching so long that they had begun to think army life fit only for men of common calibre, men who had plenty of patience and were willing to pass day after day without any event of interest—that is, men who were fond of a quiet life; but it did not suit them; they had expected danger in coming to war, and when it made a wide circuit around them they growled among themselves and said that the whole thing was a sham; it was too dull. What had they enlisted for but to fight? and if they could not fight, they might as well go back to their lumbering among the mountains, where life at least had its variety, and was seasoned with the fine spice of risk.

But now, danger after so many shabby evasions was a present and threatening fact; all these sights and sounds had familiarity in them, and, moreover, they meant something. The roar of the cannon was like the thunder of ten thousand logs leaping down the cataract of a swollen mountain stream; the smell of the battle smoke tickled their nostrils like the ashes of one of their own mountain forests burning in summer, when the dead heat has been hovering for days, and every tree is as dry as a coal; thus they found a double joy: the smell and sound of home, and the break in the monotony of recent life. So the Bucktails were happy,



and, seeing the battle roll nearer and yet nearer to them, its front a wall of bayonets and rifles and cannon muzzles, each grasped his own rifle, much as the lumberman seizes the handle of his axe in both hands when preparing for a blow, and stood, feet planted like stout saplings in the earth, and waiting.

The Bucktails smiled; the smile was not one of malice nor derision, merely a smile of content. They had no hatred of the foe, and they did not undervalue him, they never made such a mistake as that; on the contrary, they had the highest respect for him, and that was why they smiled. Here was an enemy entirely worthy of themselves, the Bucktails, sons of the forests and mountains, and they would be lowered in no way by meeting him; anger had no place whatever among their feelings at this moment, and they stood like gentlemen, unexcited and unafraid.

Their commander gave the order to fire. The rifles seemed to leap to their shoulders and the flames to spurt from the muzzles at the same moment. Then nothing was heard among them for a while but the clicking of the gunlocks, the crackle of the volleys, the stifled cry of a man hard hit, the deep breathing of the brigade, and once or twice the quick, snapping order of an officer. The front of the Bucktails was a sheet of fire, and the bullets sang merrily through it and the smoke beyond. By and by they waited a little for the smoke to lift.

There is a jester or a joker, a man of many words, in every regiment or company, and the Bucktails rejoiced in theirs; he was a youngster of six and a half feet, one of the largest of them all, and his name was McConnell, half Irishman half Scotchman by descent, and all American by birth, feeling, and fact. Standing upon a rock, where his six and a half feet became seven and a half feet of rawboned and picturesque humanity, he exercised his gift of irresponsible speech and invited the

rebels, in a voice like mountain thunder, to come on and discuss a current topic of importance. But his tones were friendly, like those of one knight to another.

"We are waiting, gentlemen," he said. "We have heard of Fredericksburg, and Manassas, and Chancellorsville, but we are here; you see that we do not run away. We are ever anxious to meet you, and hospitable though you may be, we shall be equally so! Come on, gentlemen, we beg you, we pray you, we are tired of waiting, we rejoice at the sight of such fine men."

McConnell's Irish descent was evident sometimes.

His brother Bucktails looked upon him and smiled an indulgent smile. McConnell was a privileged character, and if he wished to use words that were big and long there was none to oppose him.

The invitation was accepted; the approach of the Southern line did not cease, and its front blazed with flame; the bullets and shells flew in showers.

The Bucktails smiled again, and it was still the gentle, forgiving smile of extreme good nature. The battle was acquiring a pleasant warmth; they foresaw a period of healthful and important activity.

"Now that seems real," shouted McConnell to the enemy from his rocky perch. "You are all wool, and a yard wide, gentlemen to the bone, and you mean business. That's what we like to see, but we beg to inform you that the Bucktails are still waiting."

His tone became one of exaggerated politeness, and had in it a strain of anxiety; he feared that they would not persist in their advance, that they would not come fast enough, that they did not place sufficient reliance on the Bucktails, that they would disappoint the gentlemen who were waiting with such eagerness to keep an important engagement with them. He implored, he begged his Southern friends not to disappoint the Bucktails, and he described the grief of his comrades if they

were compelled to go back to their mountain homes among the logging camps without such an interesting meeting.

The smile of the Bucktails deepened and remained. McConnell was a credit to his regiment, and they would not interfere with his flow of speech; the beautiful words were linked so beautifully together; they too felt the exuberance of life and the joy of strong men about to use their strength.

Wishing to encourage the rebels and show that their reception would be as warm as the promise, the Bucktails began to fire anew. Their carbines cooled a little, the smoke floated away, and the whole target was disclosed. They excelled themselves, firing more swiftly than before in their good humour and zeal. The stream of their bullets increased in volume, and they stood in a broad and continuous blaze of light made by the flash of their rifles.

The battle flared along a wide semicircular line and its thunder deepened; the sounds blended, the shouting of the men, the rumble of the cannon wheels, the voice of the cannon itself, and the penetrating crash of the rifles, all confused, intermingling, forming a roar that had a range of many notes, each threatening. Dense columns of smoke arose, shot through with the brown of trampled earth.

The smile of the Bucktails became expansive. They continued to fire into the solid gray mass that came toward them; presently they paused again, and, looking eagerly to see what they had done, were pleased when they noted the new lanes in the Southern line, the cumbering of the earth with the fallen, and the hesitations of their foes. They were sharpshooters who had killed deer and bear, and it pleased them to think that even amid so much smoke and dust they could still look down the sights straight and draw the bead true.

“Gentlemen, gentlemen!” cried McConnell, in ap-

pealing tones, "why do you delay? Don't you see that we, the Bucktails, are waiting? Virginians, Kentuckians, Tennesseans, Texans, whoever you are, I wouldn't have expected this of you! Soldiers with your caps full of victories, are you going to leave the Bucktails, who want your company?"

The Southerners had no notion of disappointing their foes; they were merely reforming their front line, shattered by the rifle fire, and they advanced again with steady step, heads up, eyes bright, ranks even.

The hearts of the Bucktails were full. "We have come to stay, and here we stay," they said to each other. They noted carefully the ground they stood upon, in order that they might not be pushed back from it and not know it. They fired another volley, and again saw with pleasure its effect. The bullets and the shrapnel were whistling over their heads, but they had heard storms on the mountains make a louder noise. Suddenly the leaden sleet of the rifle balls sank lower, and the Bucktails were in its path; it went on through the regiment like a knife through cheese, and the muster roll of the Bucktails was shorter. But the Bucktails only smiled their habitual smile; they had expected to pay a price; they had been paying a price all their lives; logging and the winter storms always insisted on taking toll, and the loggers had no right to grumble. The dead lay where they fell, the badly wounded struggled to the rear, and the living did the work they were there to do.

McConnell shouted his defiance; he admitted that the Southerners had done well with the last volley, but he bade them take notice that the Bucktails were still waiting; they had purchased in fee simple the land upon which they stood, and would defend their right against all who came.

The Bucktails smiled and jested with each other. Nothing had occurred to disturb their good humour; the foe was behaving in an admirable manner, he was

disappointing no expectation of theirs, and they would disappoint none of his. They reloaded and fired their rifles with all the rapidity of skilled hands, sending the bullets home in a shower that swept level with the ground, and not higher than a man's head above it.

The blood leaped in McConnell's veins and his heart pumped it in a great flood to his head; he was breathing the fumes of battle.

"Don't you hear the song of the bullets?" he cried. "Listen how it calls to you and soothes you! It's like the buzz of the wind among the trees on the mountain top; it's like the song of a river flowing down a gorge; it's like the whistle of the axe as it bites into the tough wood! I love to hear it. It's music in the air, and makes my muscles strong."

McConnell was battle-drunk. Moreover, he was feeling the Homeric inflation, tinctured but not qualified by a Celtic infusion. All the Bucktails showed the enthusiasm of their bard. Knowing danger all their lives, they took no extra thought of it now merely because it came in a new form. They shouted their defiance again in the old Homeric fashion, bade the enemy come on, and boasted that they would hold the ground upon which they stood until a region that is warmer than this froze over! Their spirits were effervescent, overflowing. The shells and the bullets flew over their heads and around them, but did not strike them. Some special fortune designed for the Bucktails seemed to protect them, and therefore, as the battle deepened and rolled up toward their line in circular waves, the smile of the Bucktails deepened too, and spread in circular waves across their faces.

Meanwhile the ardour of the Bucktails grew. They had not lost an inch of ground; instead, they pressed forward to meet the enemy, and their ranks were steady and even, flexible like good steel, but as tough. The crash of their firing paused only when their rifles grew

too hot, or for the battle smoke to lift, and always the same smile of content was upon their faces.

The flow of McConnell's eloquence was unchecked, and came in an expanding stream. He made a run on his vocabulary; he used all the long and polite words that he knew, and his manner, always courtly, grew courtlier and more courtly. Then he turned to gibes and jeers, and ridiculed the Southern marksmanship. He told the enemy how his bullets and shells were flying wide, and bade him fire lower.

There was a nasty scream, a long, flying hiss, and a shell aimed with deadly skill burst upon the Bucktails where they stood thickest. The regiment quivered for a few moments like a man who has received a staggering blow. Then the wounded were carried away, and those to whom the combat was nothing now were left alone. But the Bucktails still smiled; this was only an incident of battle, and it was remarkable that it had not happened before. The smile became as hearty as ever when their heavy return fire caused the enemy to stagger and then stop, and McConnell burst into a shout of triumph and defiance, almost unheard now, for the thunder of the battle was roaring in their ears, and the incessant "Wheet-wheet" of the bullets was like the shriek of a storm.

The faces of the Bucktails were red, the hot blood at last showing through the brown skin; their eyes were flashing with determination and pleasure, and their teeth were shut hard. The clouds of smoke which had risen in front when they fired their last volley floated up a little and disclosed again the faces of their enemy as red and determined as their own. Then the sleet of rifle balls which had been whistling over their heads bent lower, like a flight of wild ducks, suddenly sweeping downward, and began to cut a way through the Bucktails.

The range of the Bucktails had been found at last,



and the cruel sleet beat continuously upon them, riddling their lines, filling their squares full of holes like a pepper box, and giving them no rest. McConnell felt his blood leap as the fire lashed them through and through. His brain was hot and his eloquence rose to its highest. The Bucktails still smiled as this flight of steel and lead cut through them, and they responded to it with a mountain storm of their own. Yet they could hear around them the pat-pat of bullets striking home, a sound like that of pebbles dropping lightly on the grass, and the low cry of men—not much more than a sigh—as they fell. But they encouraged each other; stood with shoulders touching, and offered a bulwark of broad breasts that did not flinch. They refused to yield. They had bought the ground in fee simple, they repeated, and they would hold it.

The attack decreased in violence presently. The battle lines of the enemy seemed to shift to other points, and the Bucktails ceased for a time to be a centre of attention. The clouds of drifting smoke lifted again, the sunlight reached them, and they saw the cruel rents and seams that had been made in their lines, where the shell and the shrapnel and the bullets had passed. The Bucktails had held their ground, but they had been forced to sow their dead freely upon it to prove that it was theirs.

But McConnell—valiant, sanguine, irrepressible—lifted up his voice and shouted defiance as of old, the Homeric fire still burning in his veins, and the battle smile appeared again upon the faces of the Bucktails.

“They are beaten!” cried McConnell. “They are afraid to attack us again!”

But the column of the Southerners which had parted for a moment in front of them swung back together with a click like a ball going into its socket, and there again were the faces of their enemies showing through the smoke, and coming on. A stream of fire

was directed upon the Bucktails, and their first rank crumpled up in the heat. But the second took the place of the first, and, fighting, stood there amid the shells and bullets, McConnell, the self-chosen trumpeter, shouting to his comrades and encouraging them with the cry that at last they were seeing a real battle. But the Bucktails had no thought of yielding. They intended to die to the last man first, and with an incessant closing up of their shattered ranks, and a swift return of the hostile fire, they stood firm until the tempest sank again, and the enemy was forced to fall back before the iron front of the lumbermen.

Then the Bucktails made an accounting of themselves and undertook to see how many lived and how many had died. They looked over the ranks and the little heaps of slain, and at those who still stood, an almost equal division. Then they looked at the faces of each other and noticed the change.

The Bucktails had ceased to smile!

"Courage, boys!" shouted McConnell. "It seems that the enemy is in earnest. I believe that he actually means it to-day!"

"If he isn't in earnest, he shouldn't make such a good imitation," growled a captain of the Bucktails.

The enemy was in earnest—great, deadly earnest. The Bucktails could no longer doubt it. Because he had paused once more was no indication that he meant to quit. He would return again and again, and many times. He would give the Bucktails no rest; he would not only equal the demands of politeness, he would exceed them. The smile reappeared upon the faces of the Bucktails, but it was fitful. Moreover, it was faint as well as fitful. Yet the Bucktails rose to the need and presented the same front of steel to the enemy, who were forming anew before them, with a solemn drum somewhere beating the charge.

The Bucktails, in the earlier phases of the combat,

had taken note of the whole battle which swirled over a long semicircle, but by a slow process their attention was concentrated upon their part of it; they were monopolized by their own combat. The foe was too active and dangerous to permit anything else, and now they admitted it.

The fire of artillery reached them, as they awaited the new charge, and burned them. They quivered under it and twisted about, but could make no adequate reply. They did not like this. It seemed to them contrary to the rules of the game, and was an unfair advantage. They were cut up by great guns, while their own covering artillery was directed upon some other point of the Southern line.

The last smile, faint and flickering, left the faces of the Bucktails; their complexions grew redder, and red streaks appeared in their eyes. They began to swear, not mild, liquid oaths that break harmlessly like summer raindrops, but deep, rasping, uncut, many-cornered oaths, that were flung red hot from the throat, and burned like acid.

The Bucktails were growing angry!

And there is something fearful in the anger of a brigade of mountain men all of whom are six feet high, and many much more; men of the open air and swelling muscle who had been good comrades with danger all their lives. McConnell was the angriest of them all. His eyes were inflamed and the cords of his neck stood out. But he lost the power of speech—his surprise and wrath choked him. The rich flow of his eloquence no longer mingled with the shriek of the battle. Yet the Bucktails were prepared to make their greatest effort.

The Southern line was hurled upon them again, crested with bayonets and preceded with showers of bullets. But the Bucktails planted their feet in the ground, and, standing amid their dead and the blaze of their own rapid volleys, received the full weight of the

charge which broke against their breasts. The smell of sweat and blood, of clothing and flesh, burned by the flash of gunpowder, filled the air. The smoke and the flame and the shouting mingled in one red whirl, and the reek of battle inclosed them all.

Then the pillar of fire and smoke separated, and the combatants fell apart. The charge, like its predecessors, had shivered itself to pieces on the iron wall of the Bucktails.

But the Bucktails were not exultant. There was not a smiling eye in all their ranks. They looked again over their brigade, and to many minds came the simile of one of their own mountain forests swept by a hurricane. McConnell, now a dumb bard, was unhurt, but, as he stood amid the wreck around him, a single tear ran down his brown face. It gave way to anger when he turned his eyes toward the enemy, and saw that enemy, fierce and indomitable, his forces massing again, rushing forward to a new attack.

Angry, defiant, battle-torn, and with no semblance of a smile, the Bucktails gathered themselves afresh for the defensive, while the battle wheeled and thundered around them.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### BATTLE'S SHIFT AND CHANGE

NOTHING was more peculiar than the chances and changes of this strange and furious battle, brought on without intent, but, once begun, fought with a fierceness unparalleled, often hand to hand, and fortune shifting from one side to the other with a fickleness and rapidity that dazed the combatants, but did not take from them their courage or fighting power. There was, too, a remarkable succession of commanders, particularly on the Northern side, as throughout the day new divisions, called by messengers or the sound of the guns, were continually hurrying to the field, and bringing with them generals of higher and still higher rank. Doubleday had been superseded a half hour before noon by Howard, who, looking from the roof of one of the houses, saw all the roads out of the west and northwest covered with Southern troops marching to the field of battle; but, raising his eyes to the east and northeast, he could see no more Northern soldiers, and, feeling that Gettysburg must be held, no matter what happened, he sent urgent messengers, some for more troops, and one to Meade himself, telling him that the great day had come.

The forces on the Southern side were steadily increasing, and fortune was certainly hovering over their bayonet points. But the North suffered her terrible losses and did not yield. The Bucktails and their companion regiments saw their numbers melt away under

the fire of the cannon and the rifles, their ranks become thin and broken, but they knotted them up again like a broken whiplash, and still presented a continuous line.

Shaftoe and I stood among the troops, still unhurt, but mere brown masks of men, covered with dust, in which the rills of perspiration had ploughed little gullies, our features distorted with the long strain and fever of battle, our throats and lips dry and burning. We had lost our horses long since in the shift and change of the battle. We had lost touch, too, with our officers, and our only plan now was to stand where the fight was thickest.

We noticed the momentary lull that usually precedes a heavy attack. Shaftoe instantly let the stock of his carbine fall to earth and drew deep breaths. Then he took a chew of tobacco.

"It's the best that I can do now," he said, "but I'd give my chance of promotion for a good dinner."

I was looking at the field which was strewn as far as I could see with the fallen. Shaftoe was looking toward the hills behind Gettysburg.

"I wish we were there," he said. "It's a better place to fight than this. Since we've got to lick the Southerners back into the Union, and make 'em happy after we've done it, it's well to take all the advantages we can while we're doing it."

"We may be in that position sooner than we wish," I said. "The Southern army seems to have made up its mind to drive us there, and farther."

"There's one thing I'd rather see coming than a good dinner," said Shaftoe.

"What's that?"

"A million of our men—yes, at least a million good fresh Northern soldiers, with ten thousand pieces of the heaviest artillery; then I'd feel safe. Boy, never despise the value of numbers on your side. Always have 'em if you can. The best general isn't always



the one that fights the bravest, but the one that gets there first with the biggest army and the heaviest guns. I've read about old Napoleon, and he always did it. That's why he won. If I was a general, expected by a confident country to win everything, I'd have it put in my contract, first thing, that I was to have ten times as many men and ten times as many cannon as the fellow I was to whip. Then let the sneaking hound come on!"

I looked with admiration at this man who could speak so calmly at such a moment. Then I saw a movement in the Southern lines. Heavy masses of infantry were gathering on the slopes, batteries were moved forward, and suddenly they opened fire from many great guns upon our lines. Beneath this shower of iron, and protected by it, the Southern troops advanced.

"They are coming!" I exclaimed.

"I sha'n't disturb myself over their coming until they have come," said Shaftoe.

The solid mass of the Southern army heaved forward, moving over the ground as if it were a single body. The smoke from the artillery behind hung over it like a veil, but between the veil and the earth the faces of the men stood out sharp and clear.

The Northern artillery answered the Southern, but was inferior and was gradually beaten down by the opposing shot and shell. The cannoneers were killed beside their guns, and the guns themselves were crushed by the weight of so much iron hurled unceasingly upon them.

"We shall have our hardest nut to crack now," said Shaftoe. "It's luck that we've got stone walls and fences and railway cuts and roads here to help us."

I saw well enough that it was a moment of hazard to the army. The dense columns of the enemy, their evident determination, their powerful supporting artillery, the deadly accuracy of their fire, were sufficient proof to

a soldier of any experience that the defence must now be of the most desperate kind. Our front ranks had begun already to fire their rifles, volley after volley, sending the bullets straight into the oncoming mass. But it did not stop the Southern advance. They fired their own volleys, too, as they approached, until they were so near that their artillery ceased for a moment lest its shells should strike friends as well as enemies. Then the invading mass heaved up with a mighty effort and hurled itself bodily upon us.

I felt the bank of smoke and fire swell out and envelop me. I saw the points of many bayonets and a wave of faces sweeping down upon me, while the crash of cannon and rifles and the voices of shouting men filled my ears. The front ranks of the defenders were crushed and driven back in fragments, and then I found myself with Shaftoe and others behind the shelter of a stone wall firing bullets, as fast as human hand could crowd them into carbines, into the wall of fire and smoke in front of us.

It was no longer an ordered battle, precise, arranged by mathematics, and directed by skilful generals, but a *mêlée*, a hurly-burly, a wild, confused conflict, in which each man fought for himself, and the passions were let loose to show of what the human race can be capable in its wildest moments of battle fever. It seemed to me that we had all gone mad together.

The Southern generals were watching the smoke bank in which we were fighting, eager to see it move forward, past the walls and fences, and then envelop the rear lines of the Northern army, but it hovered at the same spot over the slopes. The Southern line broke in vain upon the stone and wooden barriers, but there was no lack of courage and of sacrifice. Officers and men rushed forward together, and offered their breasts to the bullets and cannon balls, but the slopes could not be carried. The smoke bank thinned gradually; the

spurts of flame decreased, and the black figures, like so much tracery which had struggled in the cloud, resolved themselves into human figures. Then the smoke bank split entirely apart, like a cheese cut down the centre by a knife, and the Southern lines fell back, leaving us gasping and panting, but still holding the slope, while between lay the price that both had paid.

The attack had failed.

The Southern generals beheld the repulse, but, undismayed, turned at once to new movements. They were about to advance now in concert and with all their strength. The Southern trumpets which had been heard first west of the town, then northwest, and then north, now sounded from the northeast too. The invading force enveloped Gettysburg in a great semicircle, a gray coil, which was to compress and crush everything within its folds. Ewell, the Southern general, looked down from a ridge, and saw three Southern brigades approaching from the east side of Rock Creek, the stream whose banks were so high in places that it seemed to form a natural barrier, and he rejoiced, knowing that another fold of the Southern coil was now closing in on Gettysburg.

Some of these new troops, coming while the chances of the battle still fluctuated, were from the farthest South, and among them were the Georgians, tall, big-boned men, but fair like nearly all the Americans, now a thousand miles from home, full of courage and proud of their march into the enemy's country. The signal was given to these Georgians to cross the creek and fall upon our flank, and they obeyed. Before them lay the creek with its fringe of willow trees, and beyond was a field of wheat, shining like gold in the sun. Our batteries opened upon them with many guns, but the Georgians reached the rows of willows, and in a moment their gray uniforms blended with the greenish gray of the trees. Then they passed through the fringe and

plunged down the slopes of the creek, their caps lingering in sight for a last moment like long rows of heads without bodies. Then they were gone, but our artillery poured a curving fire into the creek bed. The line of caps reappeared on the nearer shore and after them the bodies of the Georgians, still advancing with the long Southern stride that eats up the ground, the lines in even array, unbroken by the willows, the rocky gorge, the ascent, or the shells that burst among them. They raised their bayonets for a charge, and the sunlight flashed from them in fire. In front waved the banner with a single star.

I saw this advance, and I noticed the rapid play of colour, the yellow of the wheat like beaten gold, the steel of the bayonets like dark silver, the gray of the uniforms shading off into a weather-stained brown, and the faces of the men growing eager as they approached their enemy. On came the Georgians through the wheat; the yellow straws twisted about them, sometimes wound around their bayonets, and tried to hold them back, but they paid no heed to such slender resistance, and, firing a volley, rushed with the bayonet upon our flank.

Our line crumpled up before their blow, and their watchful general, beholding the result and knowing the value of successive strokes, hurled fresh masses upon us. Once more the combat became hand to hand, and, spreading like a flame, raged along the entire front; but their general, not content with one blow, or two, struck three and four and more, picking up regiments with his hand, as it were, and throwing them straight at the vital point. Fortune, so fickle, made a decision, for the day at least, and she chose the South. The issue could no longer be doubtful.

There are few things more terrible than the rout of an army. The success of one is the defeat of the other; the glory of this is the ruin of that, and men are an

unreckoned trifle. Our command was divided, order and cohesion were lost, cannon were overturned, men knew not what to do. The Southern general continued to drive forward his wedge, and our column, decimated by the cannon and rifles, racked through and through by many hours of hard fighting, split like a rotten log. But it had done as much as human flesh and bones could stand.

Then the rout began, the wild pell-mell of men who know that they can not fight any longer, and obey the human impulse, the animal instinct, to save themselves. We were all swept back together; at some points our resistance had been successful at first, but when the main part of the line was crushed these detached defenders were involved in the general wreck, and back all were driven, the gallant Bucktails, everybody, a torrent of fugitives, beaten by bullets and cannon balls, and conscious that we had fought so long and so well, only to lose. I looked up at the smoky sun, and it marked mid-afternoon.

"Isn't there time to save the battle yet?" I asked of Shaftoe.

"There'll be no saving for us unless we can rally on those hills yonder," replied the veteran, pointing to the slopes of Cemetery Ridge, now gilded by the western sun. "Bobby Lee, if he's back there, is not the man to let a beaten Yankee army retreat in carriages."

The rout grew wilder; the people of Gettysburg, who had awaited with such trembling hopes through all those anxious hours, saw it coming, and they knew that once again the Army of Northern Virginia had won, as it seemed destined always to win. The Southern line extended and pressed everything toward a common centre, Gettysburg. It swept over the hills and hollows and past the fences and stone walls, over the wreck of regiments and batteries, past the slopes for whose possession they had fought so long, and as this line ap-

proached Gettysburg, its semicircle contracted, and the line thickened and compressed our beaten army, concentrating its fire upon it, and dealing it blows incessant, and steadily growing heavier. Twenty batteries delivered their shot into the mass of retreating men, and the watchers in Gettysburg deemed us all lost.

The flight went on; our beaten brigades lost men at every step; only the core of our force, the body of the strongest in the centre, could hold together; beyond this the regiments were shattered, and the wreck was swept up like driftwood before a flood. Then our crushed army fled through Gettysburg, leaving a great slice of itself there in the enemy's hands, toward the hills beyond.

The sun was yet high above the distant mountains; there was still time before nightfall to take or save an army, and we of the North, or rather the fraction of us still able to fight, now witnessed another change of leadership for which that day was so remarkable: Hancock arrived, and by right of rank superseded Howard. Like his predecessors, his efforts were to save; the battle of that day was lost, no one could deny it; but there would be a to-morrow, and one might fight again.

We reached the slopes of Cemetery Hill at last and were protected by some reserve men with artillery, who had dug intrenchments and prepared this refuge, so welcome to the routed battalions. Then we could rest a little and look upon what was left. But what a sight we saw! The battle, opened by mere detachments, had been fought from first to last by forty thousand men—twenty-three thousand for the South and seventeen thousand for the North. Of those seventeen thousand, only a scant five thousand had escaped to the hills; all the others had fallen or been taken, and the South had suffered an equal list of killed and wounded. From Oak Hill, through Gettysburg to Cemetery Ridge, was one wide path of red ruin; the five thousand could have



the gloomy consolation of knowing that they had fought all day, and until two thirds of their number had been lost, a record that few battlefields in the history of the world could show. It was something to know that we had fought so well even if we had lost, and we were not without this sanguinary pride.

We took only a few moments for breath, and when we felt the rugged slopes of the hills, the natural fortifications under our feet, we faced the enemy again, expecting a new attack and ready to resist it; there were yet two or three hours of sun, and an enemy so energetic as ours would not leave us alone.

The attack did not come. The Southern brigades were swarming in Gettysburg, and some of the generals were eager to lead them on against Cemetery Hill, but there was a division of counsels, and they lingered. Our troops at once reformed their lines, posted their artillery, made new breastworks, and waited; meanwhile Slocum arrived and superseded Hancock, being the sixth man to command the Northern army on that remarkable day.

The sun set on the red battlefield, the town, the hills, the thousands of fallen and the soldiers who waited. The thunder and crash of the battle sank to the intermittent crackle of musketry, and then to the hum and rumble of voices and marching men.

The day ended. The dying, turning their eyes to the west, saw above the hills the last red glow of the sunken sun.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE CLICKING OF THE WIRES

THE momentary silence that followed the crash of the battle was heavy and threatening; after so much noise, it seemed strange and against Nature. The night sank down suddenly upon the field and blotted out the towns and hills, and through the darkness came no sound; then a rumble sprang up and swelled; the lights began to twinkle on hill and valley and in the town.

The rumble increased, and the lights grew like bunches of fireworks igniting. The two armies turned to work; this was to be no night of rest; the battle of that day, the 1st of July, had been fought by the two vanguards, but a fourth of the total. By the next daylight all would be there, and nearly two hundred thousand men would stand face to face for the final test. We knew now that the great moment had come, and within the narrow valley between the ridges, upon which the remains of the two vanguards stood, the fate of a nation would be decided; the veterans of a hundred battles, they recognised the crisis. While generals and colonels had been planning, and guessing, and trying to name the place upon which the decisive battle would be fought, Fate, careless of them all, had chosen already the unknown little town of Gettysburg. There it lay, in the hands of the South now, its few feeble lights flaring in the darkness, its frightened inhabitants who

had not fled or joined the defenders trembling in their homes—a respectable, modest little town, shuddering under the terrible honour that had been thrust upon it unsought.

Shaftoe and I were working at an embankment, and we rested a few moments to stare into the valley and at the threatening ridge that lay over against ours. We were silent; even Shaftoe, the philosopher, hardened as he was by thirty years of war, was awed; he knew better than I that the carnage we had seen that day was but the beginning.

The vapours and the battle smoke floated over the field and permeated the air. The night sank down, close, heavy, and portentous. The lights increased in number, but became dimmer. The rumble grew.

The activity of the two armies went on—not the energy of battle, but the energy of preparation, and never was there greater need of it. Lee himself, the South's great commander, arrived before sunset and surveyed the field, so brilliantly won by his vanguard. He might have ordered, before the night became impervious, another attack upon our beaten remnants as they lay exhausted and gasping on Cemetery Hill, but he did not. Some of his generals have criticised him for his failure to do so, but whether they were right or not the historians do not agree. Silent, impenetrable, a man who never claimed credit and never shunned blame, he let the world judge him as it chose.

Perhaps he saw difficulties that his generals did not see. Perhaps he was lamenting the absence of the brilliant, too brilliant Stuart, with his ten thousand cavalymen, gone now some days on a fruitless raid around our army; but, whatever the cause, he did not attack when we were least able to stand it.

Meade, too, a slender man wearing eyeglasses and not of imposing appearance, came soon after nightfall. Hancock, grasping the full measure and meaning of the

battle, had sent messengers for him, and not waiting for them to arrive, went in person to tell what he had seen and to bring his commander-in-chief. Thus Meade rode in the dark along the hilltop, and by the flaring camp fires looked upon the field which his vanguard had so gallantly lost.

Meade, like the Southern leader, was cool; he, too, sent messengers for troops, and all through the night he studied the field, noting the points for defence, putting the newly arrived regiments in place, hurrying more messengers for others, and detailing to generals the duties of the next day—the day which all expected to bring forth so much.

That night witnessed a wonderful gathering of men. Gettysburg became a centre to which all things tended. From the two great semicircles of lights facing each other on Seminary Ridge and Cemetery Hill radiated lines of other and fainter lights, flickering and dying away in the darkness; many roads came to Gettysburg, and along all these the troops were marching. It seemed a singular circumstance that the Southern soldier came chiefly out of the north, and the Northern chiefly out of the south, each turning his back to the hostile section.

The regiments came to both armies all through the night, muddy, patient, enduring, ready to kill or be killed, according to order. The hostile lines extended to north and to south as the new regiments and brigades took their places, and the flickering fires bent in two great semicircles.

The full moon came out and lighted up the ridges, the columns and clefts of stone, the sombre, cave-like hollows and the unequal summits of Round Top and Little Round Top, the two steep hills that stood like huge towers dominating the field, tried in vain to penetrate the chasm of the Devil's Den, and threw its light over the soldiers who slept in thousands

along the slopes, and the dead who lay in the valley below.

The tombstones in the old cemetery were cold and white in the moonlight; that cemetery was full of men, the living sleeping above the dead, Northern soldiers covering all the spaces between the stones. Meade and his staff passed among them after midnight, picking their way in order not to step on the sleepers, but too busy with the work of the morning to draw any significance from the place. The general walked on, and the sleeping soldiers remained motionless under the shadow of the tombstones.

As hour after hour passed, the ring of bayonets and gun muzzles contracted, closing in tighter on Gettysburg, and the two armies grew. But forty thousand combined in the first day's fighting, the numbers soon rose to forty thousand each and then passed on. The regiments crowded each other; the artillery was massed in batteries along all the hillsides, and the artillerymen slept beside their guns.

It was a singular scene to one not animated by the feelings of those who were to have a part in the vast tragedy—the long, dim slopes, the lights, the forms of the recumbent men almost hidden in the dusk, the sombre hills and rocks looking down in silence upon them, the vapours and patches of smoke that still drifted aimlessly about, the soothing rumble like the heave of the sea upon the coast, and the full moon throwing its fantastic light that touched everything and made it ghostly and unreal. This was some old battlefield, some battlefield of ancient times, a Cannæ or a Metaurus seen at night!

Throughout all that night, while the two armies were converging upon Gettysburg and the dead of the first day's battle yet lay upon the field, silvered by the moonlight, the telegraph wires were clicking, and thirty million people were asking what had become of their

armies. The battle for a continent and a nation was to be fought upon an area of five square miles, and all who were gathering there knew it; but over an area of three million square miles ignorance as dark as the night itself prevailed. Mingled with this ignorance was an uncertainty, a doubt far more trying. In the South there were fewer telegraphs and newspapers, and less general knowledge about the invasion, but in the North misinformation was free to everybody, and the alarm—the justifiable alarm—caused by the advance of the Army of Northern Virginia was deepened when it and the Army of the Potomac disappeared in the Pennsylvania country, and no man knew when or how they would emerge.

Wherever the telegraph wires reached, their clicking went on, bearing a message of anxiety and question; in New York, in Philadelphia, in Boston, in Chicago, and to the tiny hamlets in the woods, “Where are the armies and when will they meet?” It was asked in the drawing-rooms, where many lights glittered, and in the one-room log house of some far Northwestern town, where the only light was that of the dying coals flickering over the puncheon floor, and in each the doubt and fear were the same.

In Washington, a haggard man, old beyond his years, his face seamed into ugliness, and his eyes melancholy, was the most anxious of them all. It had been for him to decide this war; all the power of the North had been placed in his hands; he was for the time being an equal despot with a Czar; the armies and navies were at his command; he could make and unmake generals as he chose; he could plan the campaigns if he wished; all the resources of a nation were in his hands to risk as he pleased; he had done his best without any thought of glorification or gain of any kind, and so far had won but little success; he had seen his generals one after another beaten, and now the enemy so often the invaded



had become the invader. Instead of using the resources of a nation to crush his antagonist, he was compelled to use them in defence of that nation.

This man of imperial power who carried the fate of thirty million people in the hollow of his hand was as ignorant to-night as the humblest farmer in the Northwestern woods. The armies had slipped from him, disappearing in the darkness; the Army of Northern Virginia had gone into obscurity, and with it the Army of the Potomac, the sole defence against it. No one would wish to have been in his place that night, to feel his fears and doubts and responsibility as he vainly traced lines on the map and tried to follow the two armies, only to lose them always in the wilderness of Pennsylvania roads and hills. There are times when one does not wish to have imperial power, to be responsible for the fate of thirty million people.

The wires that clicked so volubly, clicked to his questions, too, but they brought no answer; they searched the darkness, they sent the question along to each Pennsylvania hamlet, and then they ran it out through the woods, until it stopped suddenly at the end of a wire cut through by some army sabre. And always the answer came back to Washington, "Nothing!" None of these questions could reach Gettysburg; it was still an unknown place to all the world save to the two armies that converged upon it in the darkness and whose vanguards had fought there; its sombre fame had begun for itself, but not yet for others.

That was the answer everywhere to all the clicking of wires, "Nothing!" Rumours and reports came in plenty, but the people had fed on them until they turned at the taste; they wanted something more solid, and they sneered at invention. The two armies were lost, swallowed up, and all the telegraph wires of the United States could not find them.

The wires clicked on all through the night and carried the same question over and over again to their uttermost ends, but the answer never varied—"Nothing! nothing!" The thirty million people, North and South alike, were helpless; they had put their cause in the hands of two champions, their armies, and these would decide the issue there in the darkness, without spectators and the cheers of friends.

## CHAPTER XL

### THE TALE THAT PEMBROKE TOLD

BUT I saw little of the gathering armies on that night and heard none of the clicking wires. The most of it was told to me afterward; even the chances of the great battle suddenly became of much less importance in my mind, a message brought by one I knew causing this abrupt change in the course of my attention. It was Mason who came. He found me early in the night, lying on the slope of Cemetery Hill and gazing at the opposite ridge that threatened us.

"I have been looking for you more than an hour," he said. "A friend of ours from the other side is badly wounded and a prisoner."

"Who is it?" I asked.

"Pembroke."

Poor Pembroke! I was shocked. My personal friends, except in the case of Tourville, and his wound evidently was slight, had escaped the bullets so far, and in a vague way it seemed to me that they would continue to do so. I went at once with Mason, and Shaftoe accompanied us. We had lost our own command long since, fighting with whatsoever body of troops we chose, and we were free to go where it pleased us to go.

"It was in one of the last charges that the rebels made," said Mason, as we picked our way among the hurt. "We beat them off for a little while, but the

fighting had been so close that they left several wounded with us. Pembroke was among them and I helped bring him up the hill. He's badly hit, though the surgeon says he'll recover, but he asked for you at once. He has something to tell you that you must know."

We found Pembroke lying on Mason's blanket near the crest of Cemetery Hill. He was hit in the shoulder, and, having lost considerable blood, looked pale and extremely weak, but he had received the most careful attention and evidently was suffering little pain. A camp fire burned near him, and many soldiers were lying on the ground, sleeping so soundly that they looked like the dead. Pembroke smiled faintly when he saw me.

"It's a change of place since we met last, eh, Henry?" he said. "Then you were the prisoner and now it's I. But don't please yourself too much; Bobby Lee's coming to-morrow to take me back, and all you Yankees with me."

I knelt beside him, grieved at the hurt of this true friend, but he ridiculed his wound and deprecated sympathy.

"Just one little bullet!" he said. "Why, we've men in our army who have been shot fifteen or sixteen times, and they improve with each wound. You've heard of the German general who said, 'Raw troops need to be shot over a little.' Well, ours never reach their best until they are 'shot' through a few times! But let that go; it's something else that I want to talk to you about. She's over there."

He pointed toward the hill where the Southern lights twinkled and passed and repassed in the darkness, and I knew whom he meant.

"Yes, she's there, and so is Varian," continued Pembroke; "and I tell you he is not to be trusted. We don't trust him ourselves. I've much to tell you that concerns Elinor and you most nearly. He, Varian, was

fierce when he heard of your escape the night of the play in Libby. He said there was collusion; he intimated that you had been helped by your Southern friends; that otherwise you could not have escaped from the city, even after getting out of the prison. He renewed his claims for Elinor, saying that this marriage of yours must be annulled; he seemed to forget that man and wife can not be separated, in our time, without the consent of at least one of them, and his influence was so great that I do not know what he would not have succeeded in doing if the unexpected had not happened. There came a rumour to Richmond and the army that Varian was not so confident of our ultimate success as he used to be. We had failed to secure the alliance of any of the European powers—you know how we relied upon him to do that work for us, and you know his ambition and love of place and power. He was disappointed, too, because you were not punished for what he considered a crime against himself; and, in short, Henry, it was said that he was not true to us, that he was willing to be tempted if anybody was willing to make the temptation great. I do not understand what his views of life and honour are; he seems to have a code somewhat different from ours, but it never became more than a whisper. It was said that Stonewall Jackson had the proofs and meant to use them, but he was killed a few days later at Chancellorsville, and what he knew no one now knows. However, it weakened his power and influence in our government, and suddenly he ceased to make complaints against any of us who were your friends, or to demand higher rewards. They say, though, that he fought brilliantly at Chancellorsville, and even now he has an important command over there on the hill. You see, with nothing but a whisper against him, and that silenced with Stonewall Jackson's death, they could not displace him after the real service he has done for our cause."

Pembroke was now silent a little and thoughtful, and I waited until returning strength would permit him to resume his narrative.

"It was directly after Chancellorsville," he continued presently, "that the quarrel between Tourville and Blanchard occurred, and that concerned Elinor and you too."

"Blanchard—that scoundrel!" I exclaimed.

"Ay, a scoundrel he was, but he will never trouble any one again. I think that you owe Tourville a debt of thanks. I do not approve of the duel which usually decides in favour of might rather than right, but this one of Tourville and Blanchard was an exception. Blanchard, you know, was the most faithful ally of Varian—Varian must have saved him from some great embarrassment in Europe—and wished to help him in all his purposes. He cherished, too, a fine hatred of you, so his desires accorded well with his master's. It was a few days after your escape—Blanchard said it was treason that helped you, and then he mentioned Elinor's name. He said that he did not understand her affection for you, but that Varian would get her yet, if not with marriage then without it; and then Tourville, who heard him, stopped his foul mouth with his fist. Blanchard demanded a duel, according to the custom of France and Germany, saying that it was the alternative of brave men. You know Tourville, rash and hot-blooded, but good of heart—he accepted instantly and chose swords, the very weapon that Blanchard wanted. General Lee, of course; would not permit a duel in his army if he knew it, but he can not know everything. They fought just at daylight in a little wood barely inside our lines. De Courcelles was Tourville's second, and one of Blanchard's men acted for him. Blanchard was openly exultant, sure that he would kill Tourville, but five minutes after the duel began he was a dead man, thrust squarely through the heart, and Tourville did not have a



wound upon him. We have never told of it to Elinor. She has heard that Blanchard is dead, but she thinks that he fell in a cavalry skirmish."

He was silent again for a little while, and I felt that I could never repay Tourville. Then I noticed that Pembroke was looking at me curiously, as if he were making a study of me. But I waited again for him to speak of his own accord.

"Henry," he said, "Elinor Maynard is your wife, but you do not know what a woman she is, or rather what a woman will do for the man whom she loves. Would any woman ever do as much for me?"

I looked at him in the deepest surprise.

"I have been holding this back," he said, "and it's another cause why the favour of Varian has declined. It is a tale that Major Titus Tyler brought to Richmond after he recovered from the wound that he received in the Valley of Virginia."

My surprise increased. Major Tyler's name had been mentioned that night when Lee and Jackson came to see me in Libby.

"And the story that Major Tyler tells," he resumed, "seems incredible, but the major swears that it's true—you know that he never lies—and we, who know Elinor, believe that he is not mistaken. He says that Varian and Blanchard, or rather Blanchard, because he planned it and Varian merely shut his eyes to it, intended to kill you that night you escaped from them in the Valley of Virginia. The way for you to escape was to be left open, and was to be so obvious that you must accept the chance. Elinor heard of it—it seems from Major Tyler himself before whom Blanchard spoke incautiously—and she took your place that you might escape in another way, because she believed that if they did not kill you that night they would soon find another pretext for doing it. It was very easy for them to mistake her for you in the darkness, and the rain, and the confusion,

but, in some strange or perhaps providential way, she escaped all their bullets. Major Tyler says that Varian himself, seeing her about to escape, and believing that it was you, fired at her. Now that he knows his mistake and sees what she will do for a man whom she loves, his love for her has become fire. He swears that no matter what happens she must belong to him, that he alone is worthy of a woman capable of such an act. I felt from the first that the major's story was true, but the hitch comes with Elinor. I told it to my sister Mary, and, full of the wonderful tale, she ran at once to Elinor to ask her about it. But Elinor will not say a word; you can not talk to her about it, unless you enjoy talking to a stone wall."

I knew in my heart too that it was true. I could see it now, looking back at all the circumstances. I was filled with a deep joy and pride that Elinor was my wife, and I acknowledged humbly to myself that I was unworthy of her. I was silent, looking across the valley at the southern ridge where Pembroke said that she was, and he, too, weak from his wound, again remained a little while without speaking.

"Why is she over yonder?" I asked at last, pointing toward the hostile lights.

"She tried to go to her uncle in Washington," he replied. "It was because she believed you were there, but she could not get away from Richmond. It was no fault of ours, but the authorities were too busy with preparations for the present invasion to arrange the transfer of a girl from Richmond to Washington. But when she heard that we were going to invade the North she insisted upon following. She wished to serve as a nurse attached to one of the travelling hospitals, and God knows that both sides have ample need of nurses! It may be that she hoped for an opportunity to reach you. Yes, she's over there. I saw her this morning before that pestiferous little bullet stretched me on my

back, and she is well. Varian is there too; and look after her if you can, Henry, because the man is mad with love of her, and to have his own way he will scruple at nothing. He would kill her rather than lose her."

Pembroke's story was finished, and he was right when he said that it concerned me deeply. Mason and Shaftoe with instinctive delicacy had drawn away when he began, that they might not hear, but now they returned to his side.

"Pembroke," I said, "I owe you too much to make you any promise of repayment."

He smiled faintly.

"What little I have done," he replied, "is for her as much as for you."

There was no more that we could do for him, and presently he closed his eyes, saying that he would sleep. Then I walked away in the darkness and down the slope toward the dividing valley. My mind was quite made up. But before I went far, a heavy hand was laid upon my shoulder, and turning I saw Shaftoe.

"What do you mean to do?" he asked.

"I am going up yonder," I replied, pointing toward the Southern position.

"You are crazy," he said.

"No, Shaftoe, my wife is up there and she is in great danger. If you were in my place you would go as I am going."

"How do you mean to do it?" he asked.

"I shall put on a Southern uniform; it is easy to get one."

I pointed to a cluster of the dead not far away.

"And be caught and hanged as a spy!"

"I must risk it, Shaftoe."

He said no more, except to mutter, "It's a fool-hardy thing," and turned away.

I stole down a little ravine, and then fell in behind a burying-party, passing with it our farthest sentinels,

and was soon in the heart of the valley where the dead lay thickest. Informal burying parties from both sides were traversing the field, and occasionally exchanging a nod as they passed, none exhibiting the slightest hostility toward one another. I let the party which I had followed go on without me, stealing away again toward the darkest place that I could find, and there, conquering my repulsion, I removed the uniform from a dead Confederate soldier, substituting it for my own. Then I advanced boldly toward Seminary Ridge.

## CHAPTER XLI

### A MAN BORN TOO LATE

I WALKED with a beating heart up the slope of Seminary Ridge and toward the Army of Northern Virginia, which lay before me. I was resolved that Elinor should not remain longer where Varian could reach her. I believed, too, that I would succeed, despite the dangers. An army resting from one great battle, and spending the few hours between in preparation for another, was not likely to pay much attention to a straggler or two.

A Southern picket soon hailed me, and, advancing, I said that I was an escaped prisoner taken a few days before by the Yankees in a cavalry skirmish. My own command, I added, was somewhere with Stuart, I supposed, but I wanted to serve again, and where I was needed most. He jerked his finger over his shoulder, pointed toward the camp fires, and said nothing more.

I walked slowly on, gaining boldness at every step as success attended me, and not forgetting, even in my eager search for Elinor, to look curiously at the camp that was now all around me. It was much like ours—full of sleeping, wounded, or exhausted men, while the unceasing rumble of preparations or of arriving troops sounded in my ears. The camp fires wavered in long, irregular lines, and beside one, talking to his generals, was a large man whom I knew to be General Lee. But I did not choose to go near him, turning instead toward the rear, where the surgeons and the nurses would be.

My task so far was easier than I had expected, and yet I should have known that it would be simple work within the camp, their sentinels once passed. The difficulty would come when I wished to get out again. Thousands of soldiers were passing and repassing me, seeking their positions for the morrow, and some were straggling. I was only one man among sixty thousand doing as many others were doing, and nobody noticed me. I made my way slowly toward the rear of the army, thinking it well not to be too eager, and now and then exchanging a word with a wandering soldier like myself. An officer once hailed me roughly and asked me where my regiment was placed. "Over there," I said, pointing in the way in which I was going. "Then see that you join it at once!" he said sharply. "All right, sir," I replied, touching my hat respectfully and going on about my business while he continued on his.

It was easy to find where the wounded lay, and I still drifted about watching for a chance to see Elinor. I knew that she would be there helping, and presently I saw her. I could never mistake her figure, although it was outlined but dimly in the darkness. She came toward the camp fire, strong and lithe, and I moved into her path, staggering as if I were a wounded or drunken man. She was about to step aside, but raising my head I gazed into her eyes.

I saw the instant look of recognition and joy upon her face like a flash of sunlight, but she said not a word. Elinor was not like other women. Her courage, her command of herself, were beyond compare. It was the soul in her rather than her beauty that made more than one man love her so.

"Will you help me with this?" she asked at length, and then for the first time I noticed that she carried in either hand a pail of water.

"It is for the wounded," she said; "and there are many who need it to-night."



I took the pail and slouched behind her as if I were some camp follower, detailed to help her with this heavy work.

"Why have you come?" she asked over her shoulder, and now I saw the anxiety in her voice. "Do you know that it is death if you are caught? It is a joy to see you, oh, you know it, Henry, but not at such a terrible risk."

"You risked your life for me," I replied, "and why should I not risk mine for you?"

I leaned forward and saw the sudden flush of rosy colour over her face. She said nothing, but looked at me with a slight appeal in her eyes.

"I shall not stay long," I said, "but you are to go with me. I have come for you. You are in great danger here."

We gave the water to the surgeons and went back for more, I always walking a little in the rear, and filling my rôle of helper.

"Pembroke told me," I continued. "He is a prisoner and wounded, but he will not die."

"I am glad that he is not worse hurt," she said joyfully. "We missed him, and I was afraid that he was lying down there with the dead who are so many."

She pointed to the valley hidden by the darkness and the vapours.

"He told me," I continued, "that Varian was here, that he watched you always, and that he was daring enough to attempt anything. Therefore I came for you. I am your husband, and I have the right to claim you wherever I find you, as I now do."

She looked at me, and I saw her smile.

"You have no need to claim me," she said. "I would go without the asking." Then her tone became very grave as she continued: "And it is true that Varian is to be feared. I fear him most of all now, at this minute; he may be there in the dark, where we do

not see him, watching us. He was one of the leaders in the charge to-day that drove you through Gettysburg, and he performed such acts of valour that General Lee himself was forced to commend him, although he distrusts him. He has spoken to me since the battle, and I feel that his eyes are always upon me—it is not merely the fear of a timid woman, Henry, it is the truth.”

I looked carefully but I did not see Varian or any one resembling him. I knew that at all times he was our most dangerous enemy, but I did not fear him. I think that I can say it without boasting. Where we had met hitherto mine was the disadvantage, but now, even here on Seminary Ridge, with the hostile lines about me, I felt that I could face him on equal terms. We were approaching the place where we obtained the water, and I repeated:

“Elinor, I have come for you. Will you go with me?”

“To the end of the world if you wish it.”

“This is the road,” I said, and I led the way into the darkness at the rear of the Southern army.

“Let me go before,” she said in a few moments. “The path will open more readily for me than for you.”

She led now, and we still carried the pails. “We wish fresh water for the wounded from the creek over there,” she said to the first sentinel, at the same time giving the countersign. He saluted with respect at the sight of a woman so evidently engaged upon a task of mercy, gave one glance at my Confederate uniform, and let us go. We passed another and then another in the same manner, and soon we were outside the lines. I put down the pail and took Elinor in my arms.

“Ah, my brave wife,” I said, “I have you at last, and nothing shall ever take you from me again.”

I felt her soft young arms around my neck, and she clung to me like a frightened child as she had clung

once before. "O Henry, I am so glad you came!" was all she said.

There is a peculiar sensitiveness, a kind of chill in the air, that often warns one of a hostile presence, and suddenly I felt it. I looked up and beheld Varian. He was as usual dressed in a brilliant uniform, and it bore no marks of the day's toil and struggles. The only expression upon his face was a faint look of irony; beyond that his eyes said nothing. He stood near us, erect, tall, and strong.

"A pretty scene, a very pretty scene!" he said in even tones. "Do not think that I intend sarcasm or ridicule, for I do not; and, frankly, I should enjoy being in your place, Mr. Kingsford. I think you know that."

"This is not the place to tell me so," I said.

"You may be right," he answered, without any break in his even tones, "but I do not know when I shall have another opportunity, and I could not let the present pass without profiting by it."

Elinor stepped a little to one side and stood there, regarding us, her young face expressing aversion and defiance too when she looked at Varian.

"I have some explanations to make, and perhaps an apology or two," he said. "You ought to feel flattered, Mr. Kingsford, as I have made few apologies in my life. Do not charge it to my vanity when I say it; rather consider it a weakness. There has been a rivalry between us, and you have triumphed so far, and yet at the beginning I should have said that all the chances were in my favour. I was born, Mr. Kingsford, to have my own way in all things; it was and is my nature. I can not help it, so I must hate any one who obstructs me. It is not the person whom I really hate, but the obstruction that he has caused. Please understand that this is the way that I feel toward you. I had the ambition of war and the ambition of love; I have lost in the latter, and it is probable that I shall lose in the former. It is

a new experience, and I do not like it. I think that I was born in the wrong age; I should have belonged to the antique world, where men had vast power and desires on the same gigantic scale. When I read of those old times it fills me with regret that I did not live then, or that then is not now. Then I could have filled my proper place in the world. I should have been one of those proconsuls whom the Romans sent out to govern great provinces; men with palaces, armies, millions of revenue, and despotic power. Then I should have been happy, and I think that I would have governed temperately and well, so long as no one opposed me. But I would have been cruel to all opposition. Do you understand me, Mr. Kingsford?"

I nodded. Despite my anxiety to take Elinor into our lines, the man held my attention. His tones were still smooth and even, but his feelings had begun to show in his face, which was flushed faintly. The slight parting of Elinor's lips showed her deep interest.

"I am endeavouring to explain myself," he continued, "and in a way, as I have said, you may consider it an apology, Mr. Kingsford, for some of the seeming wrongs that I have done you. There are many others like me in the modern world of ours, but perhaps they have trimmed themselves down to the level of the times better than I. Understand again that this is not vanity; it is merely an explanation of what you consider the moral defects of my nature. When I saw that you were triumphing over me in my dearest wish, that Elinor Maynard was loving you when she should have been loving me, it was the wrath of the antique despot that consumed me. I felt that you should be thrust out of the way, as the antique master got rid of a troublesome slave. If Elinor Maynard did not wish to marry me, she must marry me nevertheless, just as an Eastern princess is forced to wed the king who chooses her. But, believe me, I did not intend at first to trap you to

your death. That scene in the Valley of Virginia, just as it occurred, was not suggested by me. It was Blanchard, in his zeal for me—I do not wish to wrong the faithful fellow’s memory—who carried it so far, and in my passion I may have been drawn on with him. And, believe me too, Mrs. Kingsford, had I known that it was you instead of your husband who fled before us, I would have killed one of my men, even Blanchard himself, rather than let him fire a shot at you.”

He paused, and I took Elinor’s arm in mine.

“Let us pass,” I said. “You have stated your motives, and we do not attack them now. My wife and I, through Providence, have come to no harm at your hands, and we shall attempt nothing in return.”

“I can not let you pass so peacefully,” he said, his voice suddenly hardening. “I could have had you seized, Henry Kingsford, and had you shot, at five minutes’ notice, as a spy, but I relented so far, because it occurred to me that perhaps I had not always fought you fairly for the woman who hangs on your arm, when she ought to be hanging on mine. But my nature would not permit this. Now, I propose that we fight for her with swords. It is just as I say: I belong to the ancient world and not to this. Then the arm of the strongest won the most beautiful woman, even princesses. Cleopatra belonged in turn to Cæsar and Antony, and Augustus would have been the heir of Antony had not death intervened. What I propose appeals to me as our most natural recourse.”

I felt Elinor’s hand trembling on my arm, but she said nothing.

“It seems to me extremely unnatural in the year 1863, in a civilized land,” I said. “Moreover, I do not fight for what is already my own.”

“Are you afraid, Mr. Kingsford?” he said quietly; “but I do not think that you have ever been a coward. You should remember that you disarmed me once in a

friendly contest in Washington. See! I am provided! Perhaps you did not notice that I have two swords; you may take your choice. The place is suitable. The light is poor, it is true; but it is no darker for you than it is for me, and here is the lady for whom we fight, looking on and lending inspiration to each of the combatants. Is not the scene worthy of that antique world which I have quoted so often to you in the last five minutes?"

I stared at him in surprise. He had moved into our path, and I could see plainly that he was in earnest. I extended my hand for one of the sabres, and Elinor stepped aside without a word. It may be that the best woman in the world has in her nature a little of the Venus who threw the apple of discord.

He had left me no choice, and I stood before him, sword in hand. I caught one glimpse of Elinor's face, pale and lovely, but firm and confident. She stood beside a dwarf oak, fifteen feet from us. Then I looked steadily into Varian's eyes, watching every expression, that I might see what he intended. There is something now and then, in time and place, which strips us of our slow-won civilization, and brings out in us the fierce and primitive impulses. I felt one of these impulses now—the wish to fight; and as I saw the flame in Varian's eyes, I knew that he, too, was moved by it; the fact that Elinor stood by and looked on was not the last or least incitement to either of us.

His sword flashed straight at my heart, and I avoided it only by a swift leap to one side, but I replied with a thrust which was barely parried by his own blade. As it was, I heard with satisfaction the slight whir of the steel as it cut through the cloth of the sleeve on his right arm.

We paused a moment for breath, but I kept my eye on his, lest in some unguarded moment of mine he might cut me down. His look, so far as I could in-



terpret it, expressed intense satisfaction. He seemed to feel that he had won a great point, and my anger against him swelled because of this contentment that showed so clearly upon his face. I remembered, too, all that he had attempted against me, and for one moment I was ready and willing to kill him if I could.

We raised our swords again and began to fence with the caution and concentrated energy of men who mean to slay. We heard nothing then but our own hard breathing, the whir of the swords, and the occasional ring of the steel as blade met blade. Yet neither won advantage, and we paused a second time for breath, letting the points of our blades drop.

"If you move your sword again, General Varian, I will blow your brains out!"

It was a quiet voice that we heard, but, beyond a doubt, the man who spoke the words meant them. I glanced aside and saw Shaftoe standing twenty feet away, with a carbine levelled at Varian's head.

"Is this the way you fight your duels?" asked Varian with an unchanged face, but with sarcasm in his voice.

"I pledge you my word that I did not know of his presence," I replied.

"I believe you," he said. "It was not in your character to do so. I give you that much credit."

Shaftoe approached, his carbine still bearing on Varian, and I noticed now that he wore a Confederate uniform like my own.

"Mr. Kingsford," he said sternly, his manner suddenly investing him with great dignity, "I expected more sense from you than to fight in this way at such a time, but I was wrong. I thought you would get into some such mischief, and that was why I followed you into the Southern camp. Remember, that if either of you begin again, I fire at General Varian, and I don't miss!"

Shaftoe's stern words recalled to me that it was the nineteenth century, and that we stood on the edge of a great battlefield, which would claim all the strength of us both. But it was Elinor who spoke:

"He gave him no choice," said Elinor, pointing to Varian. "Only a coward could have evaded the issue, and my husband is not such a man."

She spoke proudly.

"The lady is right in both propositions," said Varian; "and yet I am sorry only because we have been interrupted. The test that we set ourselves appealed and still appeals to me. Since you control the situation, what is your will, Mr. Soldier?"

"Go!" said Shaftoe, pointing toward the flickering lights of the Southern camp.

Varian bowed to Elinor and to me, and without a word walked toward the lights.

"And now come with me," said Shaftoe, letting the muzzle of his carbine drop at last. "It's lucky that you two have me to watch over you."

I took Elinor's arm and helped her over the rough way, following Shaftoe in a wide circuit in the darkness. He looked back at us occasionally, and always seasoned his look with some rebuke of me. But his tone became more genial presently. "After all, you fight well, Henry," he said. Then I knew that I was forgiven.

One of the strangest events in my life was that long walk, over rough places and in the darkness, around a great battlefield, and from the camp of one army to the camp of another; but those were also happy hours, because all the way I felt Elinor on my arm, and I believed that she would never again be taken from me. She spoke only once, and it was to repeat her words at the camp: "O Henry, I am so glad that you came for me!"

We reached our own army without trouble, and there Elinor offered to serve with our nurses as she had

served with those of the South. I wanted her to go at once to Washington if a way could be found, but she said: "There will be still greater need to-morrow night for all such as I. And, Henry, I am near you."

So I had to leave her there in one of the hospitals and return to my place in the lines. I knew that her prayers for my safety followed me.

## CHAPTER XLII

### THE DEVIL'S DEN

THE day came, the armies awoke, and, standing up, looked at each other. They were all there, or soon would be, one hundred and sixty thousand men face to face—ninety thousand for the North, seventy thousand for the South.

The sun, slow and majestic, rose above the hills; its light in sheaves of red and yellow fell over the two armies. The brilliant rays lingered in the crannies of the rocks, and gilded the bodies of the dead. The night dews dried up, the vapours were gone, and the air felt pure and fresh. There was Gettysburg, looking from our lines like the peaceful country town it had always been before yesterday, with its trim houses and the red gold of the young sun shining on dome and cupola.

The two armies gazed at each other curiously and without hostility. The fierceness, the bitterness, the hatred that marked this war in common with other wars, was not theirs. Such emotions were for the people behind them; their own, if they had felt them, had long since disappeared in the shock of battle. The soldiers on the opposite hill were enemies, veterans like themselves, worthy of respect; it was not for them to malign men who might soon prove themselves their conquerors.

Shaftoe and I stood side by side. Neither had slept

in that night between battles, but I did not feel the need of rest. I had forgotten such things in the deep satisfaction that followed the rescue of Elinor.

We rubbed the vapours from our eyes and turned our faces to the west, where stood the Army of Northern Virginia, glittering in the sunlight. A bird alighted on a bush near us, and, unafraid of armies, began to pour out a stream of song. Shaftoe looked at him as he sung, full-throated, upon his bough, and repeated aloud:

“O for a beaker full of the warm south—  
Full of the true, the blissful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple-stained mouth!  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim.”

I said nothing. I had long since ceased to be surprised at anything this common soldier said or did; and I knew, moreover, that the American common soldier was not always like the common soldier of other countries.

“Why don’t they begin?” I asked at length.

Shaftoe did not answer. He seemed deep in thought.

Another hour passed, and then another; still no movement. The armies stretched themselves and took deep breaths. The sound of a rifle shot came presently from a point down the line, and was followed soon by another, and after that by others, in a fitful, desultory way, as if not really in earnest. There was nothing inspiring in the reports, no expression of energy; merely a lazy crackle like a tired salute. It did not stir the two armies, which continued to stare at each other in the same embarrassed way.

On went the sun in its slow, red majesty. The embarrassed pause, to which the crackling fire of the skir-

mishers formed no interruption, did not cease, and the skirmishing was unheeded. Another hour passed, and then another, and the armies did not move. The skirmishing in the wood increased in dignity. It was not now an intermittent crackle, but a steady crash, swelling and falling in volume, and unceasing. It was no longer a skirmish going on there, it was a battle; but to the main armies it was only an incident. The sun climbed on, reaching the zenith, and the armies yet stood there; it passed toward the west. One o'clock came, two o'clock, three o'clock, and still they did not move.

During all these long hours, when the two armies stood face to face and attentive, the telegraph wires clicked over thousands of miles, as they had clicked the night before, asking the same question, "What news of the armies?" and the answer, "Nothing," always came back to the tired man at Washington, as it came to all others. The one hundred and sixty thousand men who looked at each other, and were to decide the fate of the thirty millions, were hidden from the rest of the world.

The afternoon was of dazzling brightness. The sunlight streamed over everything. The smoke from the combat in the woods was only a single blur. The armies simmered in the heat.

But the time had come. An important division of the Southern army arrived, delayed two hours by a mistaken order.

At mid-afternoon four brigades of the Southern army moved forward to attack the Peach Orchard—place of pleasant name and bloody memory—and the frowning rocks of the Devil's Den.

A succession of flashes burst from the Peach Orchard, followed by a heavy, rolling crash, a sound now familiar and old. The Northern artillery was filing a remonstrance against the Southern advance.

The Southern batteries answered the remonstrance;



a vast flame flared out as the rifles took up the appeal, and the line of fire leaped up and down the front of the two armies like a blaze, running along the edge of a tinder-dry forest.

The battle extended with incredible rapidity. The rival generals saw their men meet around Little Round Top, and then disappear in the smoke bank of their own firing. Above the fighting cloud on the slopes rose the dark, tower-like dome of this summit, a massive rock dominating the southern end of the field and seeming to say to the two armies, "Who keeps me keeps the victory." Here troops were already climbing the last slope.

The Northern commander-in-chief, still watching, saw the streams of fire from the great guns, and then the Southern troops were beaten back from the edge of the crest, but not to retreat. Tenacity was allied with their dash. They attacked again, and then the thickening smoke hid the summit and the lower ridges, and the men struggling upon them, from the commander. Within this whirling cloud the combat for Little Round Top assumed a most desperate phase—a vast, confused, overlapping struggle among the rocks, where the lines could not be retained, and soldiers sometimes climbed trees to get shots at each other, feeling no hate, but the desire to kill.

There is a hill along the line of battle, with dark and shaggy hollows in its western side, forming a kind of crater, almost a cavern, sharp rocks rising up at its mouth like rows of jagged and broken teeth. It is a forbidding place, even when the sun shines in it, and one does not like to linger there; the air has a kind of chill in it, and you grow sombre. The sharp rocks threaten like the shark's teeth they are, and the ground is cold.

This place is called the Devil's Den, and few names are more fitting.

A Northern general filled the Devil's Den on the

morning of July 2d with sharpshooters—men who could hide themselves on the ground behind a stone and pick out on the enemy's body the exact spot where they intended the bullet to hit; men who could count, in the evening after the battle, the number they had killed with as much pleasure and as much freedom from remorse as if they had been hunters shooting rabbits. They were grand masters of their craft, cool and experienced, quick of eye and hand, and believed to be wholly without conscience; therefore they were to be trusted.

Shaftoe and I stood behind some rocks just above this crater, and whenever the battle let us, we watched the sharpshooters in it with both curiosity and aversion.

They had been impatient at the slow movements of the Southern army, and grumbled as the long hours of sunshine passed and brought nothing. They wanted to hear the bullets singing; to see the white puffs of smoke rise, and the men, their chosen targets, fall at so many hundred yards, proof of their skill. They could not be truly happy until this, which was meat and drink to them, began, and they felt that they were treated unfairly.

They were lying down behind the rocks, examining their slender-barrelled rifles, which they prized as wife and children, rising up now and then for a better look at the distant lines of the Southern army; a group of men tanned to a russet brown by the sun; thin, sinuous, and fierce-eyed, like forest Indians. There was a great range of age; the one on the right was nearly sixty years old, and another near him was not twenty. The youth, Hunter, was more impatient than the others. His impatience became anger, and he cursed the troops because they would not come within range of his rifle.

"Save your breath, Hunter; you'll need it soon to cool your rifle," said the old man.

"Do you suppose, Wilson, that I want to lie here all

day on my stomach, frying like a turtle on a griddle, waiting for the rebels?" replied Hunter.

"Why don't you send a letter to Lee telling him you're tired of waiting?" asked a third man, Watson.

Hunter's only reply was an angry snarl. The others laughed.

"Hunter's going to do like the Indians, and carry a stick with a notch in it for every man that he's killed," said Wilson.

Hunter was staring at the Southern lines. His was not a good face to look at; it was too long and narrow, and his greenish eyes were set close together like two peas in a pod. He had already made a good record at his trade, though, compared with some of his comrades, he was a novice. But he had his ambitions.

The sun shone into Hunter's eyes and inflamed them. The heat seemed to creep from his eyes into his brain, and he saw things through a curious red mist. Naturally morose, his temper grew angrier at the long wait; he felt of his rifle which he loved, a weapon with a barrel longer than usual and a beautifully carved stock. He held it up and admired it, then fitted the stock to his shoulder and took aim at imaginary objects.

"Hunter's in love with his gun," said a comrade. "See how he's fondling it!"

Hunter scorned to reply. Besides, he scarcely seemed to hear. He was too much occupied with his rifle. He admired it hugely. He believed it to be the most beautiful weapon in the world, and the sense of ownership that he felt, as I could see, was peculiarly satisfying. This increased his desire to use it, to devote it to the purpose for which it was made. The gun had acquired a power over him, a sort of fascination, like that of a snake, and it seemed to rebuke him because he did not find the opportunity for use. So he felt apparently that it had cause for complaint against him, and his impatience and anger grew as the sunlight

broadened and stillness yet reigned over the valley and slopes. He put the gun down. The barrel was hot to his touch under the burning rays, but he could not escape its reproach. He picked it up again, and it continually urged him on; the urging agreed so well with his feelings that he scarcely needed it. He began to measure the distance to the nearest Southern soldiers, and wonder if he could not get a shot. He lay flat on his stomach and calculated the horizontal line to an officer, apparently a colonel, whom he could see on the opposite slope. Unconsciously he began to squirm forward, dragging himself with the elbows and muscular motion of his body. He forgot his comrades; his eyes were full of savage fire, and the lust of blood was in his veins.

"Look at Hunter, turning himself into a rattlesnake!" suddenly cried Wilson.—"What are you doing there, Hunter? Come back, and don't waste your bullets on the air. You'll have plenty need for 'em soon."

Hunter came back, but he apologized to his rifle, and whispered to it that the chance would come yet. Then he stroked the long steel barrel and looked down the sights again to see that there was no mistake. He was muttering to himself, but the others did not notice it.

The sun was very hot to Hunter. While the ground in the Devil's Den was cold to his touch, the heat poured directly upon his head, and he was restless as if he had a fever. Nothing could satisfy him but the use of his gun, the beloved weapon, which had been lying idle too long, and was complaining. He pulled himself forward again, not wishing to rise up and walk, as the sharpshooters were to form an ambush, and this time his comrades did not rebuke him, since they, too, were becoming extremely impatient. He reached the edge of the Den and lay there for a while, looking more than

ever like a rattlesnake sunning himself on a rock. He raised himself up a little presently, and shouted:

“They are coming!”

He was transfigured. His eyes glittered and his face showed joy. The rifle shots began to crash farther up the line, and above them soon rose the roar of the artillery. With these sounds the transformation of the Devil's Den became complete. All its sloth was shed like a shell, and it was filled with sinuous, strenuous forms, sliding from rock to rock, and thrusting forward long rifle barrels, seeking a shot. Hunter already had taken possession of the outermost rock, and when the Southern troops came within range he picked a man and fired. The soldier fell, and Hunter's eyes expressed ferocious satisfaction. The sun burned into his brain, and the good shot inflamed it. He patted his rifle approvingly, and then quietly reloaded. He was enjoying himself, and he felt that he was a true sharpshooter, worthy of his company. He loaded and fired as fast as he could pick a target, and his breast expanded with savage joy.

All the men in the Devil's Den were busy. Those rocks became a nest of hornets, and they were stinging the flanks of the Southern army, persistent, insatiable, and always drawing blood.

The fire that came from the Devil's Den was not in volleys, nor was it a regular succession of shots. It was an intermittent crackle, each man pulling the trigger as he secured his aim. They did not intend to waste lead. They were there not merely to shoot but to hit. They were no amateurs, burning powder just for the sake of the flash and the blaze. They said but little; seldom was anything heard in the Devil's Den save the crackle of the rifle fire and the heavy breathing of the men. The roar of the battle became continuous and thunderous. Vast clouds of smoke drifted over the field and hid most of it. The sharpshooters in the Devil's Den, de-

spite their deadly work, were unnoticed so far. They lay there among the rocks, and stung and stung. Now and then a shell flew over their heads and shrapnel struck near, but none fell among them, and they rejoiced at their immunity. They were willing for the other side to have all the danger. They were not there to secure any of the glory of the war, or to give the other fellow a chance. They wanted all the chances to be their own, and they were burdened by no scruples. Their attitude was precisely that of the man toward the partridge that he hunts.

Hunter's face became inflamed, and was as red as the setting sun. The muzzle of his rifle smoked continually with his rapid firing.

"Look at Hunter!" cried Wilson, in the course of a lull. "Did you ever see such a face and eyes? He's breathing too much of his own rifle smoke! It's got powder in it, and it's gone to his brain!"

The men would have noticed Hunter more closely, but at that moment the battle flamed afresh, and the voices were lost in the roar of the batteries and the rolling crash of the rifle fire, which gave delight to the sharpshooters, and incited them to preternatural activity.

The dense columns of the Southerners, marching to attack the hills, presented their flanks to the sharpshooters, and the target was as fine and large as the most ruthless of ambushed marksmen could wish. The men in the Devil's Den sent a stream of bullets into the solid masses, loading and firing in silence, unnoticed yet, because they were lost in the vast battle that converged around them, and because they kept under cover of the rocks, with the Indian-like precaution of sharpshooters, who neglect no chances.

A cloud of whitish brown smoke from the rifles hung over the Devil's Den and hid it. The cloud was punctuated by many flashes of red fire, and the rattle of



the shots from the rocks was like the continued explosion of packs of giant firecrackers. Never had the Devil's Den deserved so well its name. It was filled with men who were earning their pay.

"Stop firing, and let the smoke lift a little," called out Wilson presently. "If we can't see, we'll waste our bullets!"

The thought of sending bullets at a vague target was unendurable to Wilson.

"Hold your fire!" he called out again. "Who is it that keeps on peppering away?—Stop that, I tell you, Hunter, or I'll club you with your own gun! Are you crazy?"

Hunter yielded, though sullenly. Perhaps he would not have stopped at all if he had not wished to give his gun time to cool. He looked affectionately at the rifle, and seemed to feel that both it and he were doing well that day. They could congratulate each other. The look on his face was that of the unredeemed savage. Hardened and merciless as all the men were, some of them shrank from him.

"I told you that Hunter was inhaling too much powder smoke," said Wilson, looking curiously at the young man. "And it isn't a healthy diet.—Is your head hot, Hunter?"

Hunter made no reply, but began to count the bullets in his ammunition pouch. There was no time to talk now. Many bullets were yet in the pouch; yonder were the Southern columns as dense as ever, and here was his beloved rifle, crying out to be used again. There was work for him to do.

The cloud of smoke lifted, and the sharpshooters saw the enemy clearly again; they resumed their fire, and breathed sighs of satisfaction when they saw that the target was nearer. The poorest among them could scarcely miss it at so short a range. The activity of the Devil's Den was redoubled. It spouted flame, and the

well-aimed bullets cut gashes in the Southern lines. So much fire, a fire so deadly, was bound to attract attention in time, and presently a shell refused to pass over the Devil's Den like its predecessors, but dropped there among the rocks, hurling many pieces of hot and jagged steel among the sharpshooters. These men did not cry out when they were struck; they left on the ground their dead, who were no longer of any use, and the wounded attended to their own wounds, while the others continued their fire with the same coolness and accuracy.

The Devil's Den belched much destruction, but now it was receiving a sinister attention in return. It was a plague, and the Southern artillery undertook to apply the cure. Two streams of fire met in the canopy of smoke that overhung it—one the flash of the rifles held by the sharpshooters, and the other the bursting of the Southern shells hurled at the Devil's Den.

The sharpshooters grew angry; they were paying too high a price for their opportunities; besides, the scream of the shells and shrapnel over their heads was so unearthly that it might have upset the nerves of men less experienced than themselves. But they were thankful that they were not so raw. Nevertheless, they neglected no precautions; they burrowed under the rocks, and some of them succeeded in protecting themselves from the searching shells. They lay flat upon the ground, and their faded uniforms were almost the colour of the rocks and dirt. Only their eager eyes were visible, and always in the first rank, nearest the enemy, was Hunter. He seemed happy. This activity, the bursting of the shells about him, the incessant roar of the battle, and above all the report of his own rifle, soothed somewhat the flame in his head, but he breathed continuously the powder smoke made by his firing, and soon he forgot his comrades, everything except the red battle in front, and the advancing masses,

into which he sent his bullets with regularity and precision.

The Devil's Den was growing hot. Each moment added to the desert of its name. One third of the sharpshooters had fallen, and the fragments of burst shells still smoked. The odours were unpleasant, but the activity of the remaining sharpshooters atoned for the destruction of the others. They were enraged at their losses, and gave their rifles no rest. Stung themselves, they stung with more fury.

Two shells burst simultaneously in the Devil's Den, and there was wreck among the sharpshooters.

"It's time to go!" shouted Wilson. "We're sharpshooters, and we're not expected to form a solid line against artillery."

All the men who could, rose to go, except one. Hunter was crawling forward, and aiming at an officer. He had watched that man and others, and he believed that he and his good gun would slay them all. He had no thought of going. He was oblivious to everything, except his quarry. Suddenly he uttered a cry of anger and grief. A piece of a bursting shell had broken his rifle in his hand.

"Hunter, you fool, come away!" cried Wilson.

Hunter snatched up the rifle of a fallen man and went on with his work. His brain was red hot now.

"Hunter, are you crazy?" cried Wilson, in amazement. "Come on!"

Hunter did not reply. He would never fire again. A shell had burst low down and directly over his head.

The Southern troops in one of their charges took the Devil's Den hill and passed on, driving us before them, but help came to us at last, and then we held our new ground, although we could not drive them back.

The tranquil sun was setting, not varying a minute from the allotted time because of the terrible struggle that whirled about the little town; it cast a deep glow

over all the field, and the swelling columns of smoke were shot through with a tinge of red, the red of the guns deepened by the red of the peaceful skies.

The armies were as heedless of the sun as the sun was of them; its splendours of scarlet and gold passed unseen. The two commanders still lifted up their regiments and hurled them at each other, and men without malice fought as if they had some precious hate to avenge.

The Southern troops who had shown such valour began at last to display less energy in the attack. They ceased the advance, very slowly and full of anger, hesitating at first, and then retreating. Above them frowned the summit of Little Round Top, untaken and threatening, crowded with its guns, which contributed their share to the shower of metal thrown upon the brave men who had failed.

The line rolled back upon itself like a carpet, but the slopes were lined with their dead. Victory rested with us at the south end of the field, but elsewhere the battle still raged with unbroken energy. The growing darkness was lighted up by the blazing gunpowder, and fresh regiments and brigades were sent into the vortex. At these points, fate or chance, or whatever it may be, still lingered over its decision, seeming to enjoy the slow doubt, and to prolong it, as if it were a delicate morsel. The Southern attack cut our squares in some places, was driven back at others, and the line of battle began to zigzag like a drunken man.

The sun shot down, the twilight darkened into night, and, seen against the black background, the redness of the battle grew. Every cannon-flash was magnified, and each rifle shot made a spout of fire. The area of flame began to contract at last, the roar of the battle became irregular, and I saw that the energy of the combatants was waning. The flame vanished, the thunder ceased, and the day's struggle was over. Exhaustion

and the night conquered at last, but there was no decisive result. The final decree, which we believed ought to be given, was withheld, and we sank down to await another day of combat.

It was ten o'clock when the second day's struggle ceased, but our second day was better than our first, although there was no exultation in the soul of Meade as he rode through his lines in the moonlit night and looked upon the awful scene of ruin and desolation. Twenty thousand of his men had fallen. The muster roll of his dead and wounded was already large enough to constitute an army. The Southern attack had failed at the main points, but it had succeeded at others, and it would come again. Meade, as he looked at the hills held by the Southern troops and saw their camp fires still burning, knew that Lee had not delivered his last blow; he would attack again on the morrow.

Shaftoe and I came out of the smoke, still together, still unhurt, but exhausted. I stopped a moment to look over the theatre of the vast conflict and try to gain some comprehension of the day's events.

"What has happened?" I asked.

"Nothing," replied the veteran. "Forty thousand men have been killed or wounded, but nothing has happened yet."

It was with no sense of cruelty, or even indifference, that he spoke. His was strictly the military meaning. He intended to say that forty thousand men had fallen, and no decision had been reached. The issue of the battle was as uncertain now as it was when it began. In silence we went to the nearest camp fire. A great passing of souls was the chief impression yet made upon me by Gettysburg.

The night advanced, the moon shone, the stars glittered in the sky of blue, and the work of the generals went on. The ravages of the cannon balls were repaired by new lines. The contents of the ammunition

wagons, which for the last two days had been pouring out powder and ball in a continuous stream, like grain from a mill, were measured. Breastworks were built and cannon examined.

I went toward the rear as soon as my duties would permit me, and there I found Elinor at work among the wounded. "She has been worth as much to us as any soldier on the field to-day," said a surgeon to me. It was a brave face that she turned to me, though pale from work and the sights of that day. "I knew that you would come back safely," she said, and then she smiled a little, and added, "Call it my woman's intuition."

We talked, in the few minutes that she could spare, about the chances of the battle, and I told her my belief that we would win on the morrow. "Another day!" she said; "surely that will end it!" Then I left her, knowing how much she was needed among the hurt, but I felt stronger, because I knew that a woman's prayers for my safety followed me.

The Southern army arose the next morning sore and angry, feeling that it had not won the success it deserved on the day before, but prepared, whenever its general called, to go back and take the triumph yet denied.

The day was bright and burning, like the two just before it. The battle had begun already, and this third beginning was made by us. Before, the North waited for the South.

Our artillery opened fire at daybreak on the Southern left, which occupied the same positions taken the day before from the North. The South, for a little while, contented itself without answer, but the volume of the firing grew fast, and their interest began to increase.

The Southern regiments, thus attacked, were the old soldiers of Stonewall Jackson, who had always taken



them to victory. They were without a single cannon; though the fire of batteries was turned upon them, they could reply only with rifles, and at close quarters. More troops were coming to the aid of their enemies; none came to them. They wondered why they were thus neglected. They could hear the sound of no battle elsewhere, but their wonder and their isolation never caused them to flinch for a moment.

The day grew hotter than its predecessors and the long morning lingered on. The battle at the North swelled and roared, but the bulk of the Army of Northern Virginia still rested on the slopes, and we wondered why it did not move to the help of Jackson's men.

"What do you think of it?" I asked as I lay on Cemetery Hill.

"Why is Lee waiting, do you mean?" answered Shaftoe.

"Yes."

"I'd rather tell you my thoughts after the battle. Then I can make them fit," replied the cautious veteran.

Two hours, three hours, four hours, and more passed, and the murmur of inquiry in both armies grew.

Now, Jackson's soldiers, who had been fighting their long and lonely battle, were oppressed with a terrible grief. They began to feel that they would have to yield, to give back; they, the unbeaten, would be beaten. They made superhuman efforts to hold their ground, but they began to slip back, only an inch or two at first, but an inch or two was too much.

The inch or two grew to feet, and then to yards. Their backward movement was slow, but it did not cease. It could not. The crushing weight driven against them was never withdrawn, and to stand was not now a question of bravery, merely of strength; the reduced lines, strive as they might, could not bear the load. Those who would not retreat were taken; infolded by our numerous brigades, and threat-

ened with annihilation, they were compelled to surrender. Arms and colours were lost. It became a day doubly tragic for Jackson's men. The survivors could neither preserve their weapons nor their flags.

They looked for help, but, seeing none, abandoned the thought of it, and back they went still farther in the smoke, leaving more prisoners, knowing the certainty of defeat for them—a defeat that was without disgrace, yet full of pain.

It was eleven o'clock, and the noon hour was coming. The battle, waged so fiercely at the north end of the line, ceased. A silence, strange, even weird, settled over the field. No shots were heard. Even the rumble of men sank to a murmur. The clouds of smoke were lifting, and through them came the burning sun.

The silence grew heavier, as if the two combatants suffered a paralysis from long and gigantic exertions, or had become appalled by their own work. The sun, like a huge ball of glowing red-hot copper, sailed on toward the zenith, unpitying. The day was breathless.

The silence, so strange, so oppressive, was broken at last by a cannon shot; it was followed quickly by five or six others, and the flames leaped up from a house and several stacks of straw between the Virginians, under Pickett, the newly arrived division, now lying on Seminary Ridge, and our lines, burning brightly and rapidly, set on fire by the cannon shot. We saw by the light the forms of their skirmishers creeping forward among the rocks and hillocks, and then we heard the crackle of their rifles. The fire of the cannon increased and spread from battery to battery the vast amphitheatre resounded with the reports. "The cover for some movement," I said to myself.

The cannonade swelled into tremendous volume, and again the amphitheatre rested beneath the canopy of smoke which now seemed natural to it, and through and beneath this canopy flew the incessant showers of

steel. The spectacle was brilliant and majestic. The flames, with the sunlight shining upon them, glittered in many colours, and the house burned like a torch that led the van.

The cannonade died after a while, and the hot guns began to cool. The sharpshooters ceased. Their fire was doing no damage, and they could not afford to waste ammunition now. The bottoms of the Southern caissons and ammunition chests were growing alarmingly near; the battle had been long, and enough powder had been burned and shot fired to equip a magazine. Then we waited again, and all the smoke floated away. The theatre of the battle-to-be was unchanged. The arena was ready, and only the actors waiting; but silence came once more, and the impatient ceased to question, knowing its idleness.

Noon passed, and then another hour. The sun hung overhead, pouring a flood of burning rays upon the valley, the slopes, and the sombre towers of the Round Tops.

A cannon shot sounded on the right of the Southern line; the single note echoed and rolled with sinister suggestion in all that vast stillness. After one minute of intense waiting, it was followed by a second cannon shot, rolling and reverberating like the first. It was a signal, and both armies knew its meaning. Those two cannon shots said, "Be on your guard!"

The time was one o'clock.

Before the smoke of the two shots melted into the sky, one hundred and thirty-eight Southern cannon, massed at the southern end of their line and fired all at once, hurled a storm of steel and iron upon our army. The first cannonade had been without result, but this was bigger and closer, and the Southern generals believed that it would not fail. The North, before silent, replied with more than a hundred guns, and our cannoneers, refreshed by their rest, worked with skill and

speed. More than two hundred and fifty cannon were engaged, and the greatest artillery duel ever known in America had begun.

The Southern batteries, in action, were more numerous, and their fire was concentric, but our men were better sheltered, and we had sixty or eighty cannon in reserve that we could bring up if needed. All the factors of a mighty duel were present, and none was neglected. A light wind sprang up and drove the smoke back over the valley and the Southern batteries, partially hiding them and the line of attack from us, but exposing our position and enabling the enemy to see the destruction there. Men were falling, supply trains were overturned and ambulances shattered, houses within our lines torn in pieces, Meade's headquarters among them, and great guns dismounted. Our soldiers not engaged were hiding behind every projection, hugging Mother Earth to escape the fire from seven score wide, hot mouths across the valley. Meade and Hancock were passing among the men, encouraging them, and watching the cannonade. Fresh guns were hurried up to take the place of those shattered or dismounted; new cannoneers succeeded the fallen, and the cannon duel went on.

The Southern gunners increased the speed of their volley firing, and we followed with an equal increase. Great as was the roar of the exploding gunpowder, it could not drown the lash of the projectiles through the air, the shrill discord of sound made by the shells, the shrapnel, the canister, the solid shot, and all the other missiles hurled by two hundred and fifty guns, worked at the supreme speed of skilled cannoneers.

But the Southern generals yet felt the old uncertainty, and there was good cause for it. Our resistance exceeded all their anticipations, and the dwindling stock of ammunition was heavy on their minds. They calculated the distance across the valley, looked at their

brigades lying around the slopes, and then up at the sun that marked the advancing afternoon. They noticed presently a decline in our fire, and they hoped that it would cease, crushed by the superior fire of the South. It did not cease, yet most of the old swiftness and spirit seemed to be gone. They began to feel that the time had come. There were still doubt and hesitation among them, a belief by some that the attack should be made; by others that it should be postponed; but the order was sent to Pickett and his Virginians to come.

The splendid brigades rose up for the task.

## CHAPTER XLIII

### HIGH-WATER MARK

It was mid-afternoon. The sun, hotter than ever, filled the valley with fiery rays, flashed along swords and bayonets, and glowed in the wheat fields, where the gold was slashed with red. The rocks burned.

The cannonade sank to a few stray shots, like funeral guns; then it ceased, and, driven by the wind, the canopy of smoke floated away, like an awning suddenly drawn back on invisible rollers. The whole battlefield leaped into the light.

A cry of admiration arose from the two armies. We saw the magnificent division of Pickett standing there, amid the sea of the dead, calm, untroubled, their ranks even, about to give the salute. We knew that these were soldiers. We were soldiers ourselves, and we did not withhold applause. Then we turned to our guns.

"They are coming," I said.

"We are ready," replied Shaftoe.

I saw them distinctly as they marched toward us in the burning sunlight, descending the slopes in solid array, silent, superb in order and bearing, aflame with ardour, their eyes on the far hills, where stood their enemy, four thousand five hundred men, ready to march through gates of fire.

It was a massive column, strong, enduring, and linked together as if made of flexible steel. The men felt the swell of muscle and tightening of sinew like



whipcord as they stepped in their pride, and the ranks rose and fell with the sweep of the ground, their arms catching the sunlight and throwing far gleams. The hot air which bore upon its breath the smell of burned powder, stinging their faces and filling their lungs, fed the flame of battle already burning so brightly in their veins. I knew as they marched so steadily what they felt, and for the moment I could march with them.

"Plant your feet deep, Henry," said Shaftoe.

"Yes, they still come," I replied.

The blood was leaping in my veins. Many voices rang in my ears. The men out there were my kindred. I was bone of their bone; I, too, was of the South, and I wished for a moment that they might succeed. They were worthy of it—men without fear, gentlemen, unafraid. Then the feeling passed.

A general almost involuntary movement occurred in our army. It seemed to contract, to cover less space, but to thicken and deepen, as if, preparing to receive a blow, it would gather its full strength at the threatened point. There was the sound of moving cannon, the clink of bullets, the sigh of the ramrod in the barrel when the charge was driven home, and the mutter of men talking, as they chose shrapnel and canister.

The Virginians gave their salute, and turned their eyes once more to their enemy. They saw in the dazzling sunlight the long lines of our army, the solid array of batteries, the mouths of many cannon, but they felt no fear. I watched them, unable to take my eyes away.

They swung forward again with long, easy steps, heads erect, shoulders back, the hot air upon their faces and the sunlight pouring upon their heads. They knew that they drew all eyes; they knew that the battle had been fought so far without them, and marking well the spot in the great concave wall of blue and black before them, at which they intended to strike, they came with measured tread. Pickett himself led. Kemper took

the right and Armistead the left. Other columns of men, ten thousand in number, formed on the flanks. But the Virginians were the sword blade that was to be driven home to the hilt. They were to win the victory for the South, and the others were to help them keep it.

The light of the sun turned to fire; all its rays seemed to be poured upon the valley which held so many dead. It was like an arena, and these Virginians were the gladiators, kept for the last and best act. They knew the greatness and danger of their task, but felt that it was an increase of honour. Their two brigades marched steadily toward us, facing the position held by Hancock, every eye on the spot chosen for the blow.

The field was still silent, save for the advance of the Virginians. The wounded raised themselves up to see; the sun beat down on the faces of the dead; the marching soldiers stepped lightly over them, and in our lines sixty thousand men looked on.

Forward they came across the valley, Pickett measuring the distance with his eye, and the men marching with the long, easy stride of the open-air Virginian. Handfuls of smoke lingered among the clefts and rocks, or floated off before the light wind. The sun was pitiless. Its heat inclosed all the field, and entered the blood of the Virginians. It burned them, and urged them to action. The red sprang into their eyes. Our lines melted into one great blue blur, and there was a haze between. The Southern shells began to fly over their heads, and the roar of the cannon swelled behind them. The Virginians paid no heed. It was the covering fire of their comrades. Those were friendly shells sounding in their ears, and the threat of the shrapnel was for their foe, not for them.

We were silent. The rifles were at rest. The cannon mouths facing the Virginians, in sombre rows, were voiceless. They may have thought that those cannon

had been crushed, overwhelmed by the fire of the South, and the gunners slain; but on they came into the valley, keeping their ranks over the rough ground, a sword blade of tempered steel balanced for the final stroke. Well did they deserve the cry of admiration uttered by both armies!

The smoke from the guns of their comrades began to float about them. The valley again became dim. The sun was veiled, but the intensity of the heat was not relaxed. The air grew thick and sulphurous, and the men breathed heavily. But there was no faltering among the Virginians. They marched as to a review. The general commanding half wheeled to the left, and they wheeled too as if on parade and came on. The smoke from the guns behind them passed far over their heads, and was banking up in front into a great bluish wall that rose up and hid us. It seemed to quiver suddenly, and was then hurled aside by a stream of fire. The report of forty heavy cannon, massed directly before them, roared in the ears of the Virginians, and the shells and shrapnel slashed their ranks. Before the light of the flash died, and the smoke closed again over the gap, they saw our gunners bending over the guns, and to right and left, curving away in a vast semicircle, thousands and thousands of riflemen, some standing behind stone fences, some behind hasty walls of earth, some in the open—but all ready.

They saw then that our artillery had not been crushed. It was there, with its gunners waiting. One hundred cannon and fifty thousand rifles would pour their fire upon the four thousand five hundred Virginians. But they did not falter. They were still gentlemen, unafraid. This was a great task, but they would not flinch it. They closed their ranks over the fallen, and marched on into the heart of the smoke and flame.

It must have seemed to these heroic men that they were truly marching through gates of fire. The wall of smoke that stood in front of them was rent continuously now by the blasts of the cannon. Solid shot beat upon them, shell and shrapnel burst among them, and the canister flew in their faces. In their ears was always the roaring of guns, and the fiercer cry of the missiles. Behind them they left the long red trail of their dead.

The fire of a whole army converged upon this column, battery following battery, and now and then a half dozen firing together in one huge gush of metal, while always the shell and shrapnel flew to the mark. The Virginians had been in the sunlit open for all to see, and our gunners marked well their course, lashing their squares with intersecting showers, and increasing the speed of their fire as the Virginians came nearer. The batteries worked like smooth and deadly machines. None spoke there save the chiefs, who gave sharp orders, but the cannoneers breathed hard and fast as they served their pieces with naked brown arms, upon which the great muscles bunched up in knots under the strain.

The Virginians did not turn. They advanced directly into the storm which swelled out to meet them, and began the ascent of our slopes. Their numbers were melting, their squares were dwindling, incessantly shorn away by the cannon fire, but their ranks were unbroken, the living stepping in place of the dead, and on they came to the music of the guns.

I saw these men again, through the film of smoke and fire, and again my heart swelled, for I knew that they had not flinched. There they were in the red haze, coming as straight as ever. I looked a question at Shaftoe. He did not speak; his voice could not have been heard then, and he looked back the reply: "I see; they will not stop!" Once more I felt that sense of

pride. These were of my own South, and Americans, too, like those of the North.

The Virginians wheeled again, and this time toward the right. Over their heads the Southern shells were still flying, though slowly now. The bottoms of the ammunition chests were in plain view, and the spirit of the Southern cannonade, from lack of material, declined; yet it was a time when powder and shell were most needed by them.

The Virginians looked up now and then, when the shells flew over their heads, and perhaps they noticed their fewness, but they took no alarm from it, approaching with the same steady valour and resolved purpose. But they needed less space at every step. The heat of the fire into which they marched was increasing. It licked through the lines, clipped off the companies, and ate into the heart of the brigades. There was a steady compression of the squares, closing up over their losses; the solidity remained, but the size decreased. A wonderful cutting down of the division had occurred since its start a few hundred yards back, but there was no decrease in its speed. The men swung their shoulders once to see if their supports—the ten thousand—were there, but they did not find them. “Lost in the smoke!” thought the Virginians. The forty-five hundred were alone marching against our entire army. The fifty thousand rifles facing them might become sixty thousand, seventy thousand; the hundred cannon might turn to two hundred, and the Virginians knew it, but their stride was unbroken, though they were now on the rocky slopes, and their object was still the same—the heart of our force.

That fire in front served as a beacon; otherwise they would have been infolded in the smoke and blinded by it. They could see neither to right nor left, but they did not look that way. Their gaze was always in front, and the light ahead never failed. It was

the light of destruction, but it was there and it was a beacon.

We marked the steady advance of the Virginians, and wondered at it. Exceptional courage had become common in this war, but we had not seen before such an exhibition as this. The admiration shown by us, when the Virginians first appeared, increased, but it did not diminish by one particle the activity of our men with the guns, and as the hostile lines approached, the fire upon them rapidly grew heavier, fresh cannon, which had been short of all but canister, opening and doubling the volume of projectiles thrown into the faces of the advancing men.

Then I heard a shrill crash which displaced for a moment the roar of the cannon in my ears. It was a new note, angrier and sharper than that of the great guns—the voice of countless rifles, and the bullets flew among the Virginians, cutting down their squares twice as fast as before. The wall of fire in their front broadened and rose. No chance for the smoke bank to settle down now! It was blown away always by the cannon and rifles. Perhaps the thoughts of some of the Virginians as they marched reached back to their own Virginia hillsides, which they now knew few would ever see again, but it was only a brief memory, and their minds turned again to the enemy before them. They had crossed some fields, inclosed by strong fences, yet these obstacles did not even break their order, and they were now at the foot of our hill that they were to attack. They swung their shoulders again to feel for their supports, but still they were not there. The ten thousand seemed hopelessly lost in the smoke, and the Virginians began to climb the hill.

Our lines were only two hundred yards away, and, beyond, the Virginians saw their destination, the heart of the Northern army, a little grove of trees, oaks, gnarled and dwarfed, fit emblems of the stern soil on



which they grew. These were the distinguishing mark of a narrow plateau, bounded on the west by rocks rising four or five feet, placed there by Nature, like a wall. Across the same plateau ran a stone fence, from whose shelter batteries were blazing, and in a second direction ran another. Rocks and fences were lined with troops, and their crests were aflame. The scrubby trees seemed to be surrounded with strong fortifications, and the goal of the Virginians was high. They saw it all by the light of the guns, the plateau, the dwarfed oaks in their summer green, the walls and fences, the batteries piled against each other, and the great army bending forward to meet them. The whistle of the friendly shells over their heads was lost in the hostile crash.

The Virginians began to discharge their rifles, shooting steadily and straight, replying at last to the fire which had so long beat upon them. But their own approach made of them a better target. The vast fire of small arms bent upon them increased, the bullets from thousands and tens of thousands of rifles flying straight at the column—a fire that filled the air with singing lead and beat upon the Virginians like a storm, deadly, incessant, pitiless. The red trail that they left behind them widened, the squares melted half away, our army infolded them, the cannon and the rifles crashed upon them from the front, from the right, from the left. Never before had men marched into such a fire. Behind them only stood no foes, but the Virginians had no thought of going that way. Before them waved the scrubby oaks, their green turned red in the cannon glare; around them was a sea of hostile faces, a flood that poured on them, but they did not falter.

They were still in compact squares, closing up of their own accord, and pressed together by the fire of our army, that now struck them on three sides. They felt the Northern enemy at their throat, and, stretching their muscles, they threw him off, only to see him press-

ing down again with the same force and weight. They marched on, cleaving the way, loading and firing their rifles, sending volley after volley, which seemed to be lost in the heaving wall of blue, and keeping their eyes steadily fixed on the clump of trees which they had chosen for their goal. They never looked back now at the red trail they left, but, heads yet erect, pushed on in the deepening fire.

Their generals were still alive—Pickett, Armistead, Garnett, Kemper, and the others. They pointed with their swords through the red mist toward the trees, and the mangled squares of the Virginians, gathering themselves anew, rushed on at double speed. Garnett, who led the first brigade, dropped dead on the slope. His men paused a moment and fired, their bullets covering with black spots the stone wall that sheltered the Northern troops just before them. Then their comrades pressed on from behind, and all sprang forward together, raising a tremendous shout, for they were now about to come to close quarters.

Some of our troops shrank back, not afraid, but amazed at this red body of men hurled among us, as if utterly reckless of death. It reminded them of nothing so much as a dripping sword blade thrust forward with vehement force. It was cutting its way through all obstacles, a wonderful exhibition of courage and daring. Hancock, the ever-ready, suddenly brought up a fresh division and poured a new fire upon the flank of the Virginians, slashing their lines and littering the ground with their fallen, but it made no difference with their course. A solid, compact mass, they hurled themselves like a single huge cannon shot upon us.

A deep shiver ran through our army, and the squares burst apart beneath the blow. Then the mighty mass recovered and threw itself upon the Virginians.

But it was impossible to stop this bolt, shot with

so much force. The Virginians pierced our front lines and drove at those behind. They were mad with the fury of the moment, still a cohesive body, red and dripping, fierce and indomitable, surrounded and pressed by overwhelming numbers, but unafraid, their lines flaming with the fire of their rifles, their bayonets flashing, and still cleaving their way to the heart of our force. Our breath was on their faces. Bayonets crossed with theirs, but beyond stood the trees that they had marked as their halting place, and they would not stop. Everything was in a flame to them. They could hear invisible drums beating them on, and the projectiles played the same tune.

Our generals redoubled the attack; they whirled into line guns that had been resting; troops not yet in the battle were rushed into the mass; from the clump of trees marked by the Virginians as their prize, Cushing and his cannon opened fire. Some of the brigades, turning about, closed in from behind, and the Virginians pressed on, the centre of a gigantic combat that inclosed them, a turmoil of men fighting hand to hand, of smoke and flame gushing from many cannon and rifles, of the crash of artillery, of blood, sweat, cries, and death.

The Virginians shook off for a moment the mass that clung to them, but it hurled itself back, heavier, more crushing than ever. Their steps became slower, the trees seemed farther away, the clouds of smoke strangled them, the flames burned their faces, the streams of projectiles slashed their ranks, and the sunlight, piercing at times through the smoke, showed the shattered squares dissolving like mists under that frightful fire. A groan arose from the Virginians. But few of their squares were left. The trees, waving their green boughs in the gentle wind, were only a little distance away. But they had not been reached. Beneath these boughs stood the guns of Cushing, firing

upon the enemy as fast as the cannoneers could load them.

"Come!" shouted the fiery Armistead, snatching off his hat and raising it on the point of his sword.

He rushed forward upon the cannon. A few men, sevenscore perhaps, followed him. The others were smothered by the hostile mass, which poured over them, wave after wave, like a flood.

Northern troops rushed in before Armistead. He and his sevenscore cut through them, but all were mingled in a turmoil, a confused, struggling heap, and the cannon feared to fire where friend and foe alike would be the target.

A fierce combat began before the guns, a medley of rifle and pistol shots, of metal ringing on metal, of shouts, cries, and oaths, and a pillar of flame and smoke inclosed it all.

The Virginians passed through, Armistead still at their head, and sprang upon Cushing's guns. They had reached the trees, the heart of our army, but only a hundred of them were there. Over them waved the green foliage, and before them, eye to eye, were the Northern men.

The gunners and the soldiers supporting them threw themselves upon the little band of Virginians, and they fought over the cannon. Armistead, shot through by many bullets, fell, and Cushing fell beside him. There, with the hot July sun on their faces, they lay, dying under the clump of trees, the high-water mark of the South.

The little band that came were overwhelmed, slain, or captured. From the battle slope behind them, through which they had passed, rose all the sounds of conflict. The others were not able to follow. Our troops had closed in again and shut the way. These Virginians who had not yet reached the trees might have turned back, but they would not. They stood

there, in the centre of our army, firing their rifles, their flags planted on captured breastworks, unable to come forward, refusing to go backward, all their generals killed but Pickett, all their field officers fallen, save one lieutenant-colonel; three generals, fifteen field officers down, yet refusing to yield.

They no longer hoped for a triumph. Its impossibility was evident to all, but the spirit of resistance was strong. They had not come so far merely to surrender. They heard their enemies shouting to them to yield, but the cries made no impression upon them, and with rifles pointed in every direction they faced the shells and bullets. Their squares were crumbling fast. The close lines around them were contracting, and soon they would need but little space.

There was a tremendous discharge of artillery into their ranks, and a great cloud of smoke settled over the Virginians. Before it raised, some bodies of men burst through and joined them. They were friends, fragments of the supports which had been lost in the cannon smoke, and were fighting at the wrong place. Detached from their comrades, these wandered at last toward the Virginians, and, breaking through the circle of foes, united themselves with the remnants of Pickett's men. There they stood together, cheered by the partnership, yet lost in the mass of enemies who converged upon them, the odds as great as ever.

The Virginians and their new comrades could see but dimly. The smoke was in their eyes, the heat was still in their blood, but there was no longer any hope, any anticipation of victory. Nothing was left for them but to stand to the last, and that they prepared to do. Their numbers were decreasing so fast that soon they must disappear wholly. The force pressing upon them was so great that their own fire made no impression upon it. The attack had failed for the South, and with it the entire battle. Yet they fought, while the ring

around them, a mass of many thousand men, pressed closer and closer, infolding and crushing them.

Now the smoke that hung in a vast bank over Cemetery Hill was kindly blotting out the difference between friend and foe, and from the tangle and density came some of the Southerners, cast forth as it were from a cloud of fire; stragglers here, a company there, disordered groups, scorched and battered survivors.

I was one of those in the great circle that pressed upon the Virginians, and upon the few who joined them at the last moment. I had never lost my admiration for these brave men and their wonderful march, but I did not forget that they were my official enemies. As the figures of those who yet lived shot out of the smoke bank, I found myself face to face with a tall man, whose long white hair was flying about his head.

"Surrender, major!" I cried; "it is I—Kingsford!"

Major Titus Tyler looked at me a moment as if he did not recognise me, like one dazed, then he dropped his sword, and suddenly burst out weeping.

"Where are the others, Henry?" he cried; "am I the only one left alive?"

I looked for his comrades, and I could not answer him. I saw nothing but our army, and the smoke, and the flash of the firing which inclosed and compressed the last of the Southern column. The major put his hands before his eyes and said not another word.

The ring of blue drew its coils tighter and tighter and crushed the Virginians. The firing sank suddenly, the smoke lifted a little, and when we looked again we saw no enemy.

Out of the forty-five hundred who came up the hill, only one thousand went back to the Southern army.

When the fragments of the Virginians burst out of the fire and smoke, the Southern leaders on Seminary



Ridge knew that the battle was over, and the last blow had failed; but the reserves advanced and met the fugitives, the batteries were ready, and the Army of Northern Virginia, calm and threatening, bade us come if we would.

Fortune, wavering for three days, had given her decree at last. The South had lost; the North had won.

But the South was still defiant. She stood upon her hill, arms in hand, and said to us, "Touch me if you dare!"

## CHAPTER XLIV

### THE FIELD OF THE SLAIN

GETTYSBURG was ended. The little town, before unknown, and yet scarcely realizing it, took her famous place in history. The fire of the cannon and the rifles died, and one of those strange silences that marked at times the changes of this battle came over the field.

The two armies, North and South, stood upon their opposing hills looking at each other, the South a hedge of arms, fierce, challenging, sure that she could repel any attack, and inviting it.

The attack did not come. The silence lasted. The sun was yet high in the skies, and its dazzling light drove the smoke away. The valley, now truly a valley of the dead, stained, torn by cannon shot, filled with bodies, rose up from the vapours and confronted both North and South.

A deep sense of awe crept over us all. The collapse came from the passions, the tumults, the carnage, all the terrible struggles of so many days and nights; we saw between us what we had done: fifty thousand men killed or wounded, a wreck unparalleled, countrymen all, the grandsons of men who had fought beside each other to establish the same country. We were appalled, because the picture of Gettysburg, after the fiercest passion was over and while the field was yet fresh, made upon every brain the impression that the triumph was

to none of us. We were destroyers, and we beheld our work!

The singular pause endured; the clouds and shreds of smoke floated far away over the ridges; the sky became again a sheet of burning blue; the heat of the sun grew more intense; its rays, brilliant and searching, were poured upon the hills, and the valley and every rock stood out like carving; there frowned the Round Tops; yonder, in the Devil's Den, where the sharpshooters lay dead, the shadows still hovered. Upon the slope of Cemetery Hill, Lee could see the clump of trees, the dwarfed oaks, beneath which Armistead and Cushing had fallen side by side, the extreme point to which the fire and pride of the Virginians had carried them.

The silence was succeeded by that murmur and rumble so familiar to the ears of the troops; we began to recover from our stupefaction, the deep sense of oppression that overwhelmed us, and we moved about and began to talk again, glad that the battle was over, glad that we were alive, and seeking to discover what comrades also lived.

"Will they come again?" I asked of Shaftoe.

"I think not," replied the veteran, willing for once to be a tentative prophet. "All of us have had enough. When I think of the last three days I wonder how you, or I, or anybody else come to be alive."

I did not answer. I was enjoying the luxury of rest, lying upon the ground with every limb relaxed, feeling now the long strain of the three days, and thinking of Elinor.

The afternoon began to wane. The fire of the sun abated, the dense, tremulous heat yielded to the shadows of the twilight. The wounded turned their faces to the skies and thanked God that the night was coming. The west glowed redly, but the east was gray. The two armies, watching each other, saw figures become dim

and blend into the group. Then night, lighted by the clear and full moon, sank down for the third time over this field of the slain.

Gettysburg was ended, but the country yet knew it not. The wires that had clicked so volubly for many days were still clicking, asking their unanswered questions; the rumours and reports that came to the great cities were swelling in volume, and sometimes spoke with a certain note, but men knew nothing to believe, much to disbelieve. Gettysburg was yet without its sombre fame, save to itself.

That night those of either army who had not work to do slept the deep sleep, or rather lay in the torpor of utter collapse, resting from three days of supreme effort and emotion—three such days as America had never known before. Some of the wounded were gathered up, but others who could not move lay where they had fallen, and they were many; far up the thousands went the tragic roll. But the noise was slight for that narrow area upon which so many men were gathered; the wounded, as usual, were uncomplaining, awaiting in silence the help that would or would not come.

It was about the twilight hour when I found Elinor again. She was sitting by the side of Pembroke, who was lying on a blanket, and the wounded man's eyes followed her in a manner that stirred my sympathy. Elinor's own face was pale—paler than I had ever seen it before, and I understood what it was to a woman to witness such a battle as Gettysburg.

"Is it all over, Henry?" she asked.

"I think so," I replied.

"I shall hear all those guns again—many times," she said.

Pembroke raised himself on his arm and looked at me.

"Henry," he said, "I know that we were driven

back. Major Tyler has been here, and he told me, but he says that we made a great fight."

"There was never a better," I replied. "The charge of the Virginians has no equal."

A trim figure stepped into the light. It was Major Titus Tyler, a prisoner—my prisoner even, but restored to his own cheerful bearing.

"You have not conquered us, Henry," he said. "We have simply worn ourselves out beating you, and shall have to give up. The odds against us are too great. I knew that we must fail when, looking across at this hill, I saw a general ride out on a white horse, and heard him shout to his men the command: 'By nations right wheel; forward march the world!'"

Then he proceeded to prove to us his proposition.

The night passed on, and the darkest hours came, without a shot. Even the skirmishers were quiet; every unsatisfied ambition cherished by them had been gratified in those three days so full of opportunities; there was no need for industry, and they rested. The lights of torches and camp fires glowed again on the opposing hills and slopes, but, to those who watched, these beacons seemed more friendly to-night, as if an end had come for a time to passion, and men might sleep in peace, even under the guns of the enemy.

The day came, the morning of July 4, 1863, the national anniversary, flooding the world with light, and showing to the Army of the Potomac its enemy fortified on Seminary Ridge and defying attack, even inviting it. Its front was a hedge of cannon mouths, and behind these the riflemen stood in deep rows; it was impervious to assault, and Meade again waited, content now to watch his formidable antagonist.

The sun, so bright at daylight, was soon dimmed by gray vapours rising on the far horizon; the close, tremulous heat was again in the air, the earth perspired; the morning was growing hotter, closer, and darker.

The day, the national anniversary, spent in so strange a manner, was verging on toward noon, and the heat was increasing in density; the vapours rising on the horizon grew to clouds of steely blue, darkening to gray, and then to black, rolling in sombre waves before the sun and hiding its light; the faint breeze died; the trampled grass ceased to quiver, the red stains upon it turned to brown; imprisoned in this damp, close air, which lay so heavily upon the lungs, the men lost their energy and the horses drooped.

"A storm is about to break," said a young soldier beside me.

"It's time," said another.

The earth was in complete stillness, save for the murmur and movement of soldiers. The day darkened to the verge of twilight, the clouds in formless legions rolled across the sky, the deep hush of Nature seemed full of expectancy. Like the army, it was waiting, but the stillness was broken in a few moments by the mutter of thunder from the west; the mutter grew to a rumble, and the rumble to a crash and a peal; strokes of lightning burned across the sky and blazed in the eyes of the soldiers, a rushing noise mingled with the peal of the thunder, and afar we saw the sweep of the rain and the wind; the big drops began to fall, and the dry earth steamed at their touch; the wounded felt the cool water on their faces, and were grateful.

"The tear-drops of God!" said a young soldier with florid imagery as he looked over the bloody field.

The rush of the rain deepened to a roar, and then it burst in torrents upon the camps, flooding the armies, soaking the dry earth, which thankfully drank it up, giving back the deep green to the foliage, rushing in streams down the slopes on which the brigades lately had been fighting with such fire, and washing from the grass the plentiful red that war had put there.

All Nature responded, indifferent to the battle that



had raged so long, or forgetful that it had been. The trampled grass, free from its red stains, straightened up and glowed in green again, the wheat shone in pure gold, on the far hills the forests were masses of fresh foliage, and the earth, so lately burned and dead, leaped to life, luxuriating in new sap and growth.

"This makes marching difficult," said Shaftoe. "The artillery will plough to the hubs in the mud."

"But nobody is marching," I said.

Shaftoe did not reply, nor did he take his attentive, inquiring eyes from the army on the opposite ridge.

The rain ceased by and by, and when the sunlight broke through the thinning clouds, the Army of Northern Virginia turned its head toward the south and began to march away, leaving behind it the fatal field of Gettysburg, but as defiant as ever, its rear and flanks lined with batteries, the cavalry covering the wagons containing its supplies and wounded, these wagons forming a chain so long that, when the first at midnight were beyond Cashtown, sixteen miles away, the last were still at Gettysburg—an army conscious that it had failed in a great attempt, yet had made a new record for courage and endurance, and was still saying to its enemy, "Touch me if you dare!" There was no sign of fear or even panic in the ranks of its men; their faith in their commander was still complete. No complaints arose from the sixteen miles of wounded who stretched in a long, black line over the muddy roads and fields and through the darkness; men with the white faces of pain who lay in rough carts and had nothing to cheer them but their own courage and the sympathetic gaze of the watchful horsemen riding beside them and bending down now and then to ask what they wished.

There have been few processions more solemn than the one that took its way toward the south that night with its fifteen thousand or more of wounded, marching in the rain and the darkness, but without lament.

Many began to believe now that the Southern invasion had rolled back forever; that the little clump of trees on Cemetery Hill was the Southern high-water mark, and would remain so; that the brilliant period of the war had passed for the South, and henceforth she was to fight without hope, and many more were to know these facts soon. Yet none thought of yielding. The only way to conquer the Southern army was to destroy it. The North was to find the road to Richmond still long and weary.

. . . . .  
When the Southern army began to retreat, our generals held a council. Should they or should they not attack? They looked around at their broken brigades, estimated their vast losses, and with the one voice said "No." The Army of the Potomac had done enough for the present.

The same day the voluble wires ceased to click and ask their unanswered questions. The proclamation of the President announced to the nation that the Army of Northern Virginia had been defeated. Throughout the North swelled the mighty wave of rejoicing.

The next morning the last Southern soldier was gone from Seminary Ridge.

## CHAPTER XLV

### THE LAST OF A LATER ROMAN

It was ten months later, and Paul Warner was entertaining his friends in a magnificent marquee on Virginia soil, in the rear of the Northern army. There had been three fat years for Mr. Warner, and he shed good humour as the sun sheds rays. His clothes were rich, and a single diamond blazed from the soft folds of the tie that encircled his huge neck. He had a great capacity for making friends, and a yet greater capacity, it was said, for using them. But Mr. Warner was a host again, and in that office his intentions were good. It was May, and the Virginia sun was warm, but sherbets and wines cooled in ice were served to all who wished. In front of us was a red, sterile country, bearing only bushes and dwarfed trees, a region wonderfully like that through which I had passed on the night I saw Lee and Jackson planning Chancellorsville. A line of soldiers in faded blue were marching over a distant hill, and beyond them arose a spire of smoke.

My wife, Elinor, sat on a camp stool near the entrance of the tent. She was dressed simply in gray, the only touch of colour being a pink ribbon at her throat. I had taken her to Washington immediately after Gettysburg and given her into the care of her uncle, Paul Warner. He loved her, and was proud of her, however much repugnance both she and I might feel toward him. Now, Mr. Warner, as he followed

the Army of the Potomac, with which he transacted a large and profitable business, insisted upon entertaining his friends, and he demanded the presence of Elinor that she might do him honour.

"Do you think that Grant will succeed in crushing Lee?" asked Mr. Upton, a member of Congress, of me. He was a tall, thin man, with high cheek bones, and eyes close together. He affected ministerial garments and a ministerial air, and it was his custom to denounce in Congress as extravagant any measure that entailed the expenditure of money. By doing so he acquired a great reputation for sagacity and economy, and was known as a custodian of the people's rights. He and Paul Warner were great friends.

"I do not know," I replied; "but I am sure that he will not be turned back so easily as our other generals who invaded Virginia."

The chief impression that Grant formed upon my mind at Shiloh was that of will and endurance, and it was confirmed by the few glimpses I had caught of him in the East. Now he was leading us, and we were expecting the two supreme commanders of the war to meet in decisive conflict.

"You might ask the question of General Grant himself," said Elinor, with a smile, "for see, he is coming!"

She spoke the truth. General Grant had alighted from his horse already, and, accompanied by an aide, was walking toward us. He was not imposing, but his short, square figure seemed to me to express unflinching resolution.

Paul Warner, Mr. Upton, and most of the others were effusive in their welcome. "I had invited you, general, but I scarcely hoped for your presence. You fall upon us, as you fall upon the enemy, when you are not expected," said Mr. Warner, meaning to pay a compliment. The general smiled faintly, but did not an-

swer. Then the introductions were made, and he began to talk to Elinor. He took an ice, but would touch no wine. I noticed that his uniform was much soiled and his beard unshaven.

I was outside the tent, and a senator, a large man from one of the richest Northern States, was standing beside me. I was off duty that day, after a period of unusually long and hard service.

"Do you notice that smoke?" asked the senator of me, pointing toward the thin bluish spire. "It is increasing."

"I see," I said. "It is a large camp fire, or perhaps the woods are burning."

"It may be so," he said. "But listen!"

I obeyed, and heard a faint but bass note, like an imprisoned wind groaning up a ravine.

"What is it?" asked the senator.

"A cannon shot," I replied, "or rather several of them."

"Does not that mean a battle?" he asked, with visible uneasiness.

"Maybe," I replied indifferently. I had become hardened by three years' campaigning. It was not now the sound of cannon shots to which I objected, but to cannon balls.

"It may be the beginning of a great battle," he said, with increasing alarm.

"Perhaps," I replied doubtfully.

And yet he was right. It was the first guns of the Wilderness—that awful battle amid the burning forests, rivalling Gettysburg itself in desperation and slaughter.

The distant rumble increased, and a dull red blur appeared on the horizon. General Grant came to the entrance of the tent and looked intently at the red flashes. Then he opened his watch and glanced at it. I was standing near him, and I distinctly heard him say to himself, "Meade is exactly on time." He signed to

the aide who held the horses to lead them forward, bade adieu to us with great courtesy, especially to Elinor, mounted, and rode toward the spurts of fire.

"Mr. Warner," said Mr. Upton, "is it not advisable for us to withdraw? I must confess that I am a man of peace. I have always opposed this wicked war."

"It's only a skirmish," replied Paul Warner, "and it's far away." Mr. Warner had grave faults, but cowardice was not among them.

I said nothing, but I saw that it was more than a skirmish. The thunder of the guns was still low but steady, and a cloud of smoke was gathering on the horizon. There were six or seven ladies in our party, but Elinor was the only one who had seen a battle, and she alone remained calm.

We left the tent and walked to a little hill near by, from the summit of which we looked toward the battlefield, although for a while we saw only the smoke and the flashes of the firing. The country before us was covered with thickets and dwarfed forests, and among them the combatants were hidden. But the struggle was extending with great rapidity, and presently we saw a battle line several miles in length. The air quivered with the roll of the heavy guns, and we heard, too, the distant rattle of the small arms. The cheeks of the ladies began to turn pale.

"Are you sure it is safe here?" asked the senator of me. I was the only soldier in the party.

"I am not at all sure of it," I could not resist replying. The ladies were not in hearing just at that moment, and, moreover, I spoke the truth.

I moved nearer to Elinor, and watched the rising battle. "Look!" she said suddenly to me, and her hand pressed my arm with nervous force. We saw an entire battery driven in haste through the bushes not half mile away. The combat was moving much near



The report of heavy guns suddenly came from both left and right, and now we were infolded on three sides.

"Mr. Warner," I said, "you must withdraw with the ladies at once!"

I saw that it was no time to wait. The battle, with one of the abrupt changes for which no one can account, was rolling down upon us. The sudden retreat of colour from Paul Warner's face showed that he understood the danger.

We turned to flee, and our way was barred by horsemen, who emerged suddenly from the bushes two hundred yards away and came directly toward us. These cavalrymen rode in gray. The ladies cried out with fear, and we stopped, not knowing what to do.

Then a strange thing happened. A score of the horsemen raised their rifles and fired at the man who led them, a handsome officer in a bright uniform. He fell from his horse, and the others, wheeling about as suddenly as they had come, galloped away, disappearing in the thickets.

I ran toward the wounded man, attracted by the sight of his face as he fell, and the others followed me. He was lying partly upon his side, and with an instinctive effort had composed both his features and his dress before we arrived. It was Varian, dying from a half dozen gunshot wounds. His face was pale from weakness and loss of blood, but his manner was as high and indifferent as it had ever been when I knew him in his pride. In truth, I can not say that I did not see him even now in his pride. He raised himself upon his elbow and said to me:

"It is our last meeting, Mr. Kingsford, and you have triumphed completely, as I have failed completely. Will you pardon me for saying again that in the beginning such an end would have seemed improbable?"

"Can't you take the others away?" I said hastily to Mr. Warner, and he obeyed, leaving Elinor and me

with Varian. I took off my coat, doubled it up, and placed it under his head. He was too weak to sit up, yet he seemed to retain all his mental strength.

"You are kind," he said, "but why should you not be to your defeated and dying opponent? It may be that kindness to a beaten enemy is the most exquisite of all revenges, because, having proved already how much you are his superior in strength, you now show to him how much greater and finer your spirit is than his. But I acquit you of any such intention, Mr. Kingsford. You and your wife are wondering why I am here in such a plight, shot by my own men. The tale is brief, but you may find it instructive. A distrust of me has been growing for a long time in the minds of the Confederate generals, and it has extended lately to the troops. I have been watched, and I knew it, yet I was not afraid. When this battle began I led a little troop of cavalry over the hills and through the thickets for the express purpose of capturing you, Mrs. Kingsford, and your husband too. On this last day of my life I paid you the finest compliment that I knew, neglecting a great battle to devote special attention to a non-combatant. A faithful spy had informed me of your presence here. I told my men that it was a scouting expedition; but when they saw the ladies and the tents, all their suspicions of me seemed to them justified. They thought that I had led them into the heart of the Northern army, intending to deliver them into your hands. So they shot me down and galloped away."

He spoke clearly and distinctly. His pride and will would not suffer him to speak otherwise, even in his last moments.

I could not resist a feeling of sympathy because such a man was coming to such an end. Tears were in Elinor's eyes.

A faint smile flickered over Varian's face.

"Recall what I told you, Mr. Kingsford," he said,

“and you will see that it was the truth. I belong to the antique world, where men were permitted to rise above their fellows and do whatever they chose if they could find the power. I have tried to have my way in this age, and you see my end. Perhaps I should have been a brilliant figure in old Rome at her greatest and worst. But I have always been willing to pay the price for what I did or tried to do, and I do not complain now. Would you object to lifting my head a little higher, Mr. Kingsford? Remember that I shall not have the power to do you any more harm.”

I raised his head. He looked at Elinor, and his gaze became singularly soft.

“I trust you will remember, Mrs. Kingsford,” he said, his voice growing weak at last, “that I have—always loved you with my whole heart. Would you kiss me—just once? I ask you in the presence of your husband. It would—smooth my way.”

Elinor stooped, and her lips brushed his forehead. Then he died quite peacefully.

## CHAPTER XLVI

### THE CALL OF THE PLOUGH

SHAFTOE and I served to the end of the war. We followed Grant through the shades of the Wilderness, the beginning of which I saw in Varian's death, and we were present a few days later at Spottsylvania, when nearly forty thousand men fell. We saw the charge on the Southern intrenchments at Cold Harbor, where the North lost twelve thousand in half an hour; we were with Grant in all the long and ceaseless hammering of 1864, when the iron general, choosing the only way, poured forward his numbers, regardless of battles and losses, always striking at his enemy, giving him no rest, while Lee, with his dwindling brigades, defended every square foot of ground; and at the last, when the South was crushed, and the great war over, we entered Richmond, the Southern capital, with our comrades.

There was a little scene in Richmond after the surrender which had its pathetic side, but in which gaiety then predominated. It was at the house of Mrs. Pembroke, and Sergeant Thomas Shaftoe, U. S. A., was the host—that is, all except, Elinor, Mason, and myself, were his prisoners, or virtually so. Mrs. Pembroke sat at the head of the table, saddened a little by the downfall of the Confederacy, but too happy over the ending of the war, and the return of her son from captivity, recovered of his wound, to grieve. Mary Pembroke did not grieve at all, because De Courcelles was beside her,

and it was only a month until their marriage. There was Tourville, just well of his third wound, and Major Titus Tyler, as usual the soul of dignity, and happy in the conviction that the South had never been beaten, but "had merely worn herself out beating the North." It was Major Tyler and De Courcelles who did most of the talking. The Frenchman, in particular, was full of life and joy. He was one of the Southern soldiers who in losing had won. Pembroke at length had all our glasses filled—with water, as wine we had not—and, rising to his feet, glass in hand, he said:

"Let us all drink, not to the Lost Cause, but to those who fought for it."

We drank, none with a better grace than Mason and I, who had fought against them, and we said no more on that subject.

Then we saw the phenomenon of three million men laying down their arms and going back peacefully to work, a war ended the day the last battle was fought, no executions for rebellion, no persecution, no revenge of the conquerors upon the conquered, no acts that would cause recollections more bitter than the war itself, but a peace that was a peace, in fact as much as in name. Nearly a million men had perished, but vengeance was not to be sought for any one of them.

The men who had come four years before at the call of the drum now began to listen to the call of the plough. They were tired of so much war, of so many battles, and the long tales of slaughter. They believed that enough blood had been shed to drown any issue. If one would not listen to the logic of all the bullets fired in four years, he must remain deaf to everything. As for themselves, they had fought all the old questions to a solution. The people who stayed at home might discuss them again if they felt like it, but they, the soldiers, knew that such things were history now and no longer living problems.

They hated now the sound of the guns, and after so long a period of silence, the call of the plough reached them again, and was pleasant in their ears. They heard the soft slide of the share as it cut through the earth and turned the fresh soil up to the sun. They remembered the sweet smell of the corn lands in the spring and the yellow gleam of the harvest in the autumn. They had seen enough of war, its dangers and excitement, and they longed once more for the peace of the fields. Mostly farmers, boys yet, the plough called them back to the old work and the old task of maintaining old States and building new ones. Their feet kept time to the call.

It was the same with North and South; the call of the plough reached both, and was alike seductive. The long-legged boys wished to see what had happened at home since they left. Many had never heard from there in all the four years, and they thought much of the hills and plains and forests which were their birth-place.

They had fought four years, and they had made a war without parallel, but they were no seekers after military glory, nor did they want a military rule, with themselves as rulers. They wished to return to peace, now that the fighting was over, and have done with the sword.

The throb of the war-drum died. The sword and bayonet were laid aside, the armies vanished, and the myriads faded into the forests and the distant fields, once more the peaceful builders of a peaceful republic.

Elinor and I were in Louisville, on our way home, when Shaftoe left us. We had formed a great attachment for this strong, cheerful man, who asked so little of the world, and whose nature was so simple, so honest, and yet so deep.

"Why do you persist in this, Shaftoe?" I asked.  
"Why do you go out in the wild Western country, on



those great dry plains, to serve as a common soldier, to fight Indians, and perhaps to be killed and scalped by them?"

"I am going out there," replied the veteran, with his cheerful smile, "because I will be more satisfied on those plains fighting Indians than I will be anywhere else. I learned long ago that the happiest man is the one who is doing with all his heart the work that he likes best to do. Well, I am a soldier—a born one, I think; not a general, or a colonel, or a captain, but a private; I peel my own potatoes. I don't like the responsibilities of an officer; if I were one, I'd be making mistakes myself instead of having so much satisfaction in talking about those of other people. Besides, a soldier has his uses, as the last four years have shown."

"But the work out there is obscure, and the public never hears of it."

"What of that? A man can learn his trade, even if ten thousand people are not looking on and applauding, and there's a heap of things yet that I want to know. I'll be with the old regular army again, the little army that fights battles, and makes thousand-mile marches, and stands boiling heat, and a cold that freezes your whiskers; that knows what it is in the sand deserts to value diamonds less than a little cold water; that dies alone on the endless plains, but always does its work while life and muscle last. They are the men, Henry, that I've lived my life with, and I'll finish it with them too. What have I got to complain of? I do not know what it is to be sick; I sleep like an innocent baby when I have the chance; I've the appetite of a wolf, the digestion of an ostrich, and the strength of most men. Besides, I'll be a master builder out there! Think of that! Not a mere builder of houses, or fortunes, or reputations, but a builder of great States."

"So you are to be a contributor to the wealth and greatness of the nation, Shaftoe?"

"That's so. But sometimes it seems to me that I'm merely helping to roll up the fortune of some Eastern millionaire, who will go off to Europe to live, where his children will learn to sneer at the country that produced him. Let me have that one little complaint, and I don't even say that I mean it. But don't forget that out in the West I'll be doing the work that I love, and it's a good place to learn about men. I think that the human race is governed too much and trained too little, and maybe out there, in our little old regular army, we strike a happy medium."

"I know you'll do it well," I said.

We said good-bye, and the old soldier began his journey to the Great Plains. Elinor and I turned southward. We were happy now, but we were sad, too, for our people, and I pitied the South. The land was filled with widows and orphans; whole families had perished, the rich were poor, the poor were poorer; but, above all, the old systems were gone; men must not alone begin anew, but learn anew. The Southern race stood bare and naked on the bare and naked earth.

But we were proud that the Union had endured such a strain and had come out of its trial greater and stronger than ever. The old faith of the millions had been vindicated.

Elinor and I did not tarry after Shaftoe's farewell, but departed the next day for my grandmother's. We had not been able to give her the exact date of our coming, and when we left the train at the little station, a tiny village of a dozen houses, we walked down the road that gleamed across the country like a long, white ribbon. It was all familiar, precisely as it was when we left it—the road, the hills, the trees, the houses; the fences even were not changed; the war had gone around it; our own State was harmed but little, and this portion not at all.

We forgot now all the war and its destruction, re-

membering only that it was peace, and that we were together.

"Is it not beautiful?" said Elinor.

We walked on. It was June. The beautiful country rolled far away in gentle waves; the grass was like velvet, and the fruit trees bloomed in cones of white and pink.

"Will my aunt forgive us?" asked Elinor presently.

"She has done so already," I replied.

I had seen Mrs. Maynard once and briefly in Richmond after the surrender, and while she was not genial, she accepted the inevitable. She was now at her home, and we would visit her soon, although Madam Arlington must come first.

The sun was setting when we saw through the trees the roof of my grandmother's house. It was unchanged; the cedars had not lost a bough; the same old peacock strutted on the lawn and spread his gorgeous tail in rivalry with the sun.

I think that some prescience warned my grandmother of our coming. She stood upon the portico, with William Penn just behind her, where the last rays of the dying day shone upon her strong old face. Then she met us, her eyes full of gladness, saying only:

"I knew that you would come back."

THE END



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